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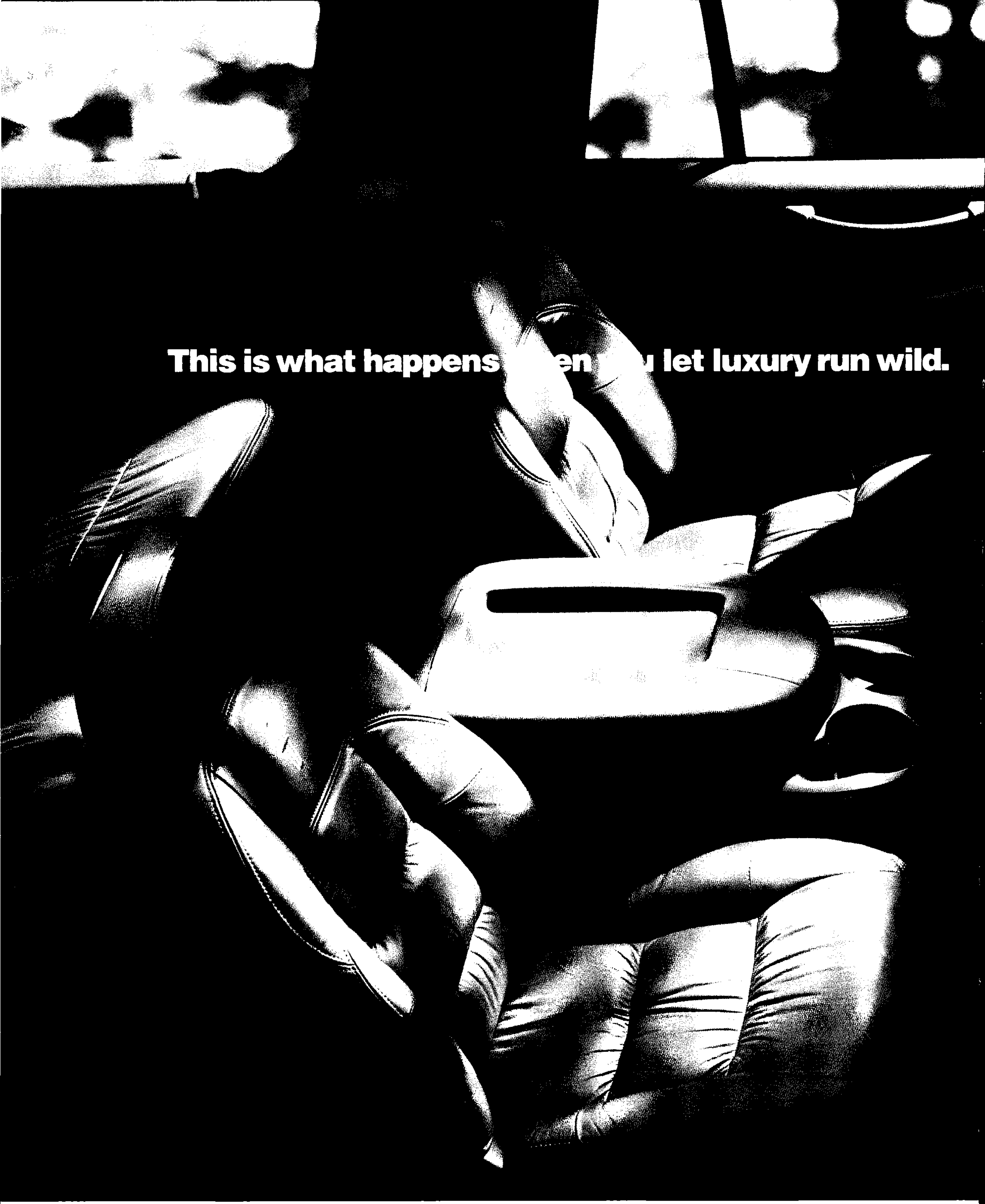
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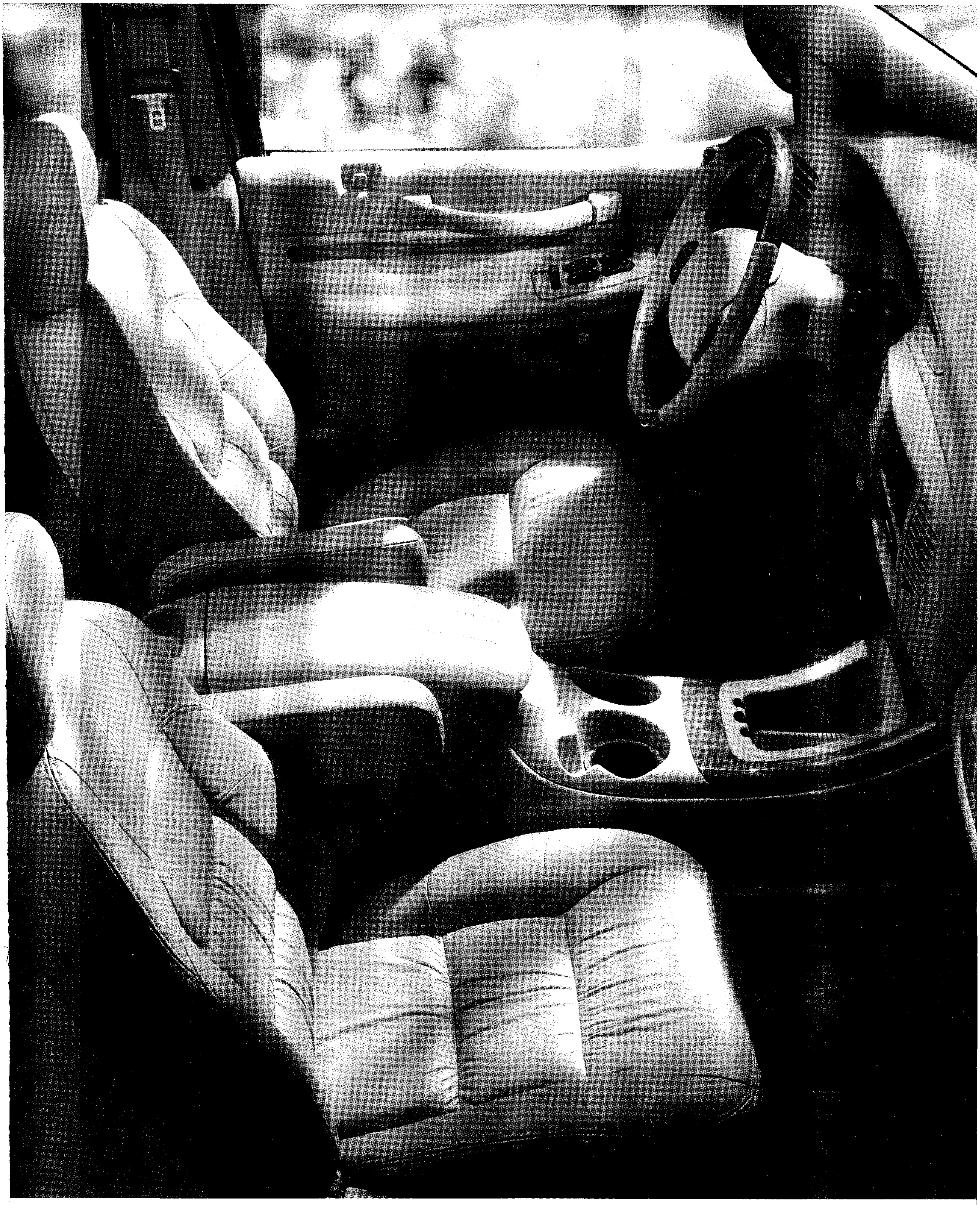

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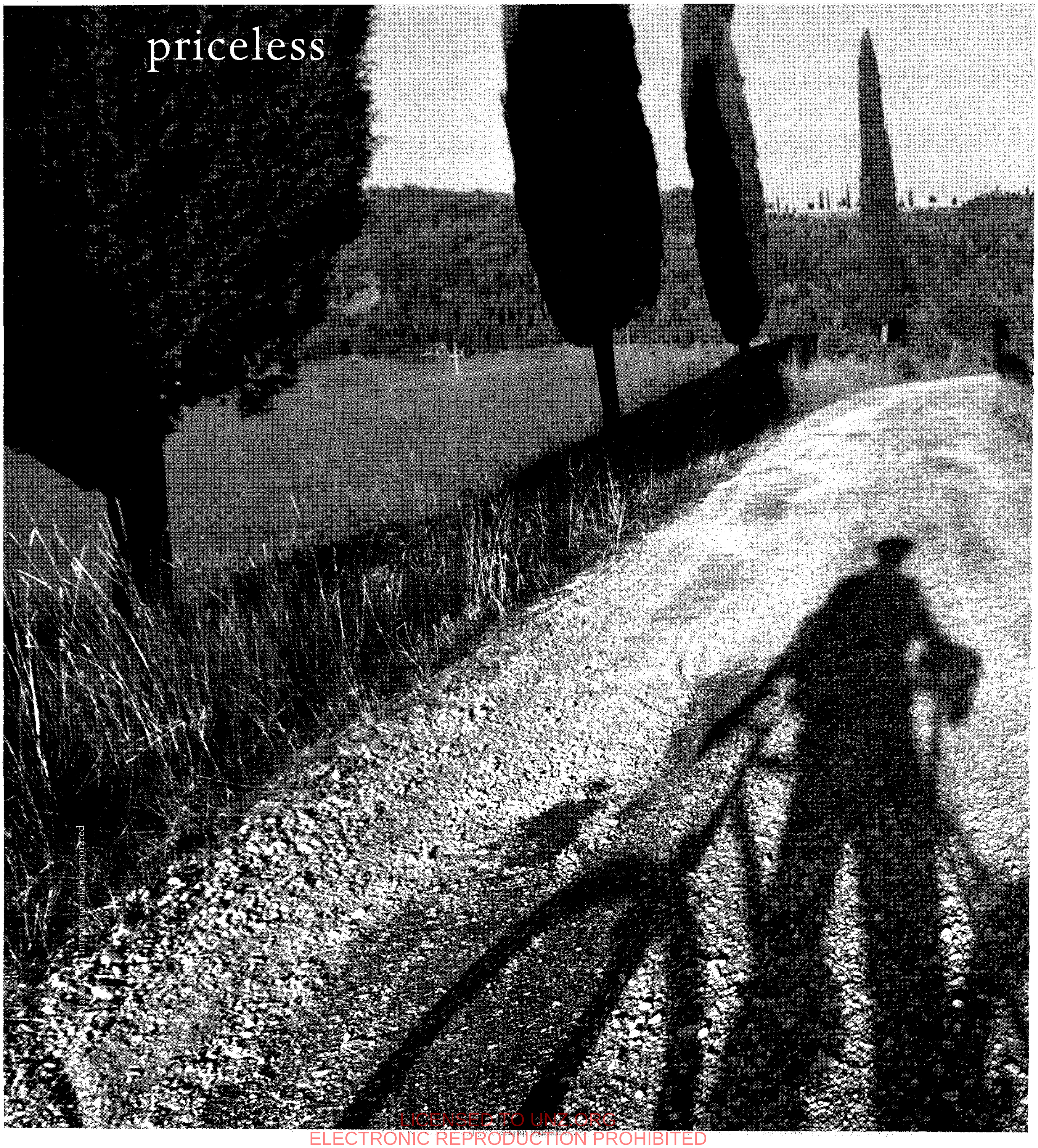
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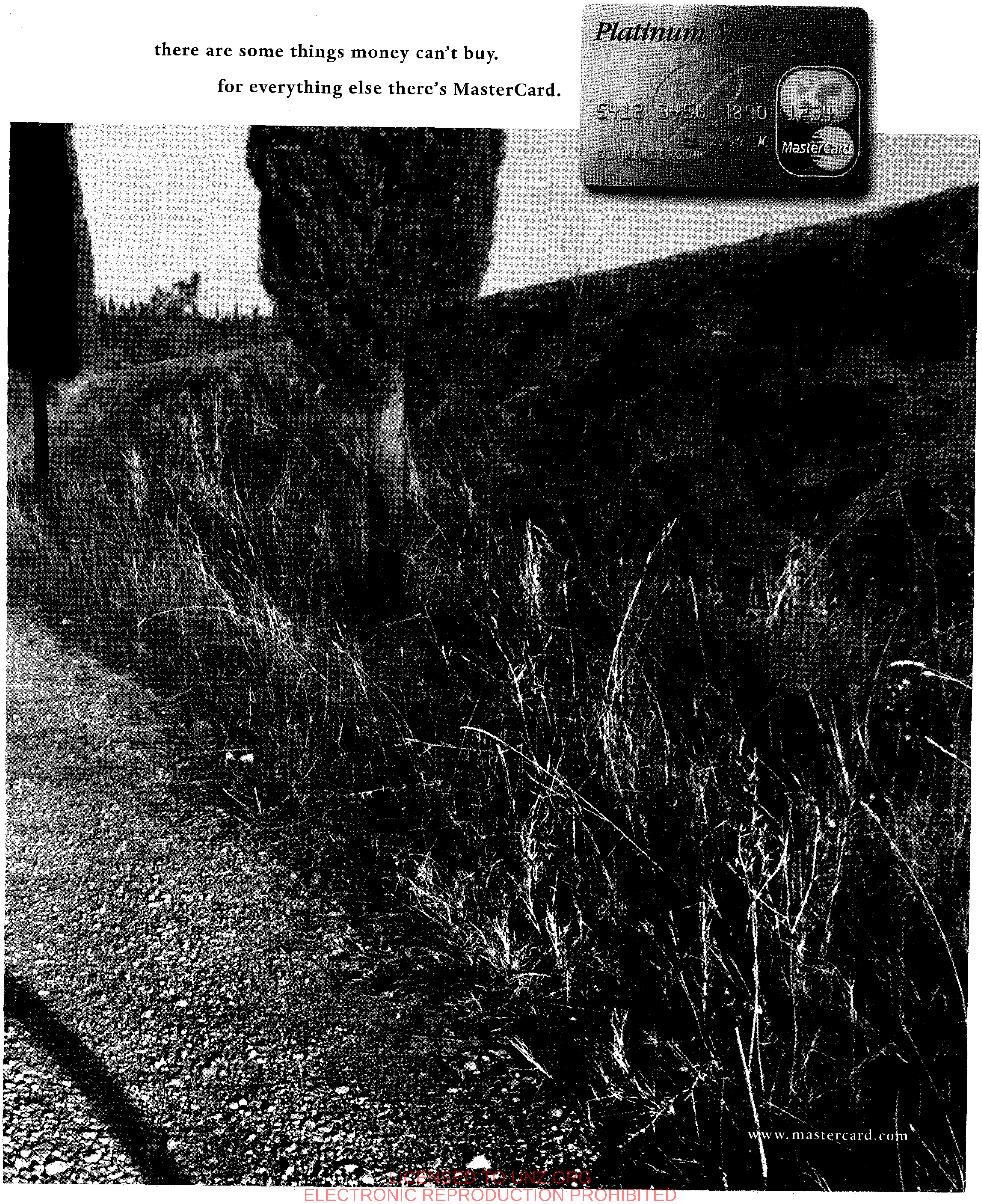
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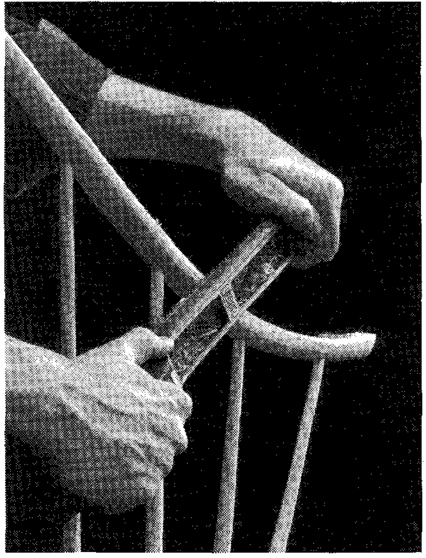

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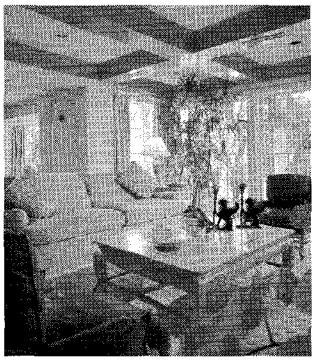

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THE NEW YORKER

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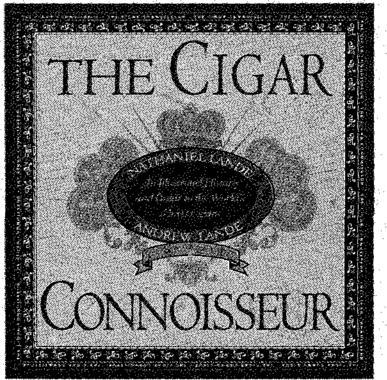

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COMMENT

LOOKING BACKWARD

New Yorkers learn to love their past.

NEW YORK CITY celebrates this week its hundredth birthday. But how can it be that we are at once so young and so old? Our history books tell us that the Dutch settled here on Manhattan in 1624 and that the British took over from the Dutch in 1664. The explanation for our multiple birthdays, it turns out, is simple. In the spring of 1897, the state legislature granted a charter transforming New York City and forty or so neighboring entities—the biggest among them Brooklyn, the smallest among them mere villages—into a single immense metropolis. On the first day of January, 1898, a new city, officially christened Greater New York, was born. It was a sensational event, accompanied by speeches, fireworks, and marching bands—and no wonder, for overnight New York City had increased its physical area sixfold, to more than three hundred square miles, and the number of its inhabitants from one and a half million to three and a half—a figure that made it by far the most populous city in the country and a rival of London as the most populous city on earth.

Prodigious as the transformation was, it slipped almost at once out of the city's consciousness (as did the prefix Greater, dropped because of its superfluity). At first glance, this seems something of a mystery: how did one of the most important chapters in our history come to be so abruptly shuffled aside? A couple of answers to the question emerge. To begin with, it is the case that New York City has always rejected knowledge of its past. In its headlong march forward, the city has given the impression that it couldn't afford the heavy burden of recollection, the sheer weight of scrutinized events. New Yorkers have habitually disagreed with Santayana's dictum that those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it. In fact, nothing in the hurly-burly of New York City life was thought capable of repetition: that was the point of the adventure, sometimes so arduous, of living and working here. In our millions, we were in a rush to make good; we would not be taking instruction from histories and memoirs that, however charmingly written, gave off the musty odor of age.

To be forever in a state of flux—oh, that had the look of progress and so of success, whereas to remain fixed in place had the look of paralysis and failure. But even to remain in place—in the simple terms of a visible presence—was nearly always out of the question for New York, thanks to its size. The island of Manhattan is small, and, as its population doubled and redoubled, its need for industrial and domestic shelter also doubled and redoubled; to keep tearing down the buildings of a previous generation and putting up new ones was a joyous necessity. It was a com-

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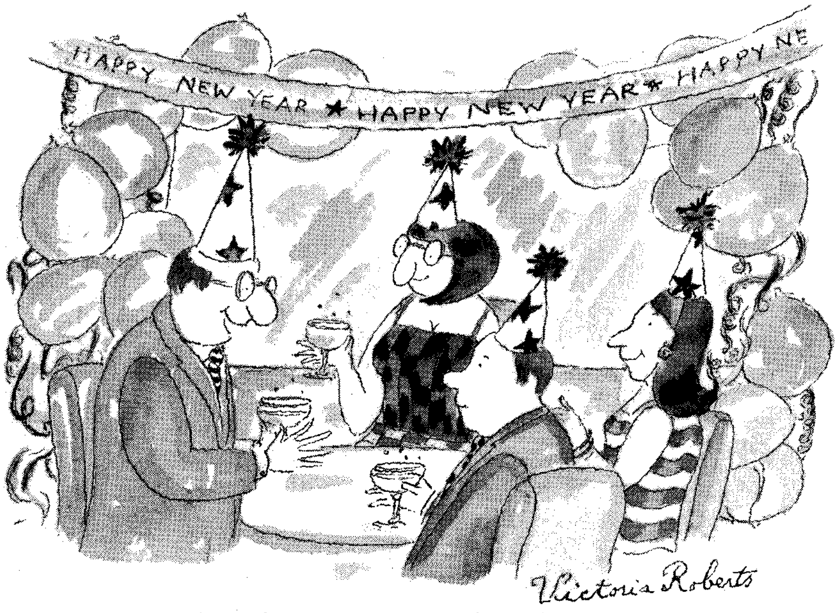
monplace, rarely objected to, that even buildings of recognized architectural merit would suffer sooner or later the indignity of the wrecking ball. Stanford White's masterpiece, the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, on the northeast corner of Twenty-Fourth Street, was designed and built to last for a thousand years, but nobody was surprised when it lasted for less than a decade, and then gave way to a conventional office skyscraper.

The second explanation for our habitual neglect of the past is based not on the city's original physical limits but on the nature of its population. For almost four hundred years, we have been a city of importunate arrivals; even today, about half of our population, like at least half of the population both before and after the city's 1898 transformation, is a combination of immigrants and first-generation children of immigrants. They are people for whom the past belongs to the countries they have left behind. If they are rootless, they are rootless by choice, seeing in most cases little reason to cherish memories of the places they came from. Valorously, they are engaged in putting down new roots, here in New York, but they do so with difficulty, in the hard ground of their ignorance and of our customary inattention to them. They lack the nourishment of even the least scrapings of knowledge about our history. They also lack the consolation of knowing—how could they know?—that in this respect they are at precisely the same disadvantage that their predecessors were, which is to say the majority of New Yorkers, to whom they have become today, however uncertainly, neighbors.

Even so, that majority is less ignorant than it used to be. For two or three decades now, a number of organizations have struggled with some success to preserve the city's past as it exists in visible form—what is loftily called, when one is pleading its case, our architectural heritage. Thought of at first as eccentrics, willfully attacking our tradition of possessing no tradition, these organizations have entered the mainstream of our contemporary urban culture, and now when they raise their voices politicians who were hitherto deaf to them turn their heads and listen. For example, a Landmarks Preservation Commission has made its presence felt in all five boroughs: some twenty-one thousand buildings are under its protection, almost a thousand of them as individual landmarks and the others lying within seventy historic districts. Walking around the city nowadays, we encounter a scattering of endearing souvenirs: on Gramercy Park, the Friends Meeting House (now the Brotherhood Synagogue), sheathed in suave Dorchester olive stone, which was quarried in Ohio; to the north, the marble Schinasi house, one of two freestanding mansions surviving on Riverside Drive; to the south, on Bleecker Street, the terra-cotta Bayard-Condict Building—the only building in New York that was designed by Louis Sullivan. Taking, with their help, the measure of an environment that is both new and old, we begin to sense the potency of the past. In an almost literal sense, we are learning to hold out our hands to that past and feel ourselves warmed by it. —BRENDAN GILL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Victoria Roberts

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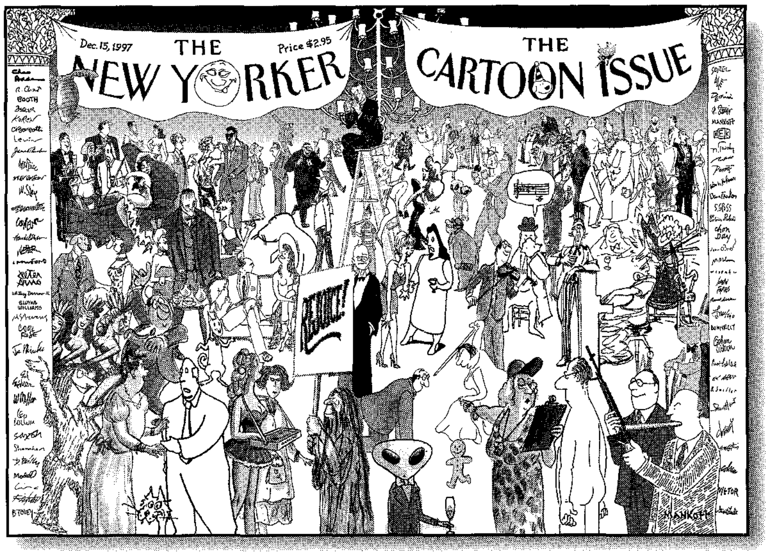

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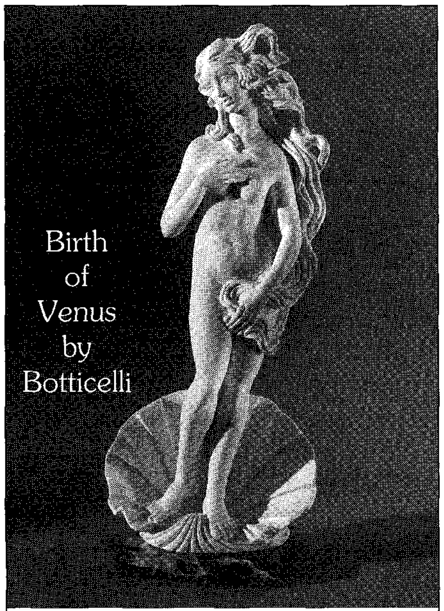

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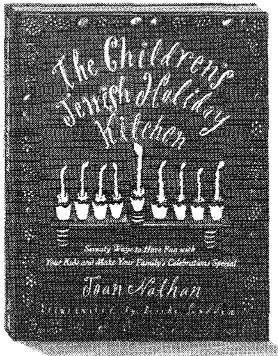
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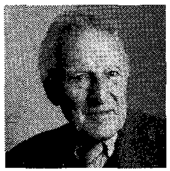
BILL BUFORD ("Window Watching," p. 36) is *The New Yorker's* literary and fiction editor and has been the publisher of Granta Books since 1989. He was the editor of *Granta* for fifteen years, and is the author of "Among the Thugs."



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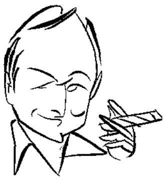

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 80) is the editor of the *Forbes* quarterly supplement *Forbes FYI.* He is the author of five books, including "Thank You for Smoking" and a collection of humor and essays, "Wry Martinis."

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THE MAIL

DOCTORING THE TRUTH

In "Professional Courtesy" (November 24th), James B. Stewart suggests that the trail of suspicious hospital deaths that may have been left by Dr. Michael Swango, after he had been convicted of battery for poisoning his peers, was made possible by doctors' fraternal inclination to overlook and cover up the misdeeds of their medical colleagues. That inclination is the consequence of the bonding that occurs during residency—a prolonged and dehumanizing period of hazing, a time of financial and emotional dependence and chronic physical exhaustion, during which criticism of one another is aggressively discouraged. While doctors' burying their colleagues' mistakes is not the only result of this system, it is perhaps *the most* pernicious one.

LEE KARR
Forestburgh, N.Y.

Mr. Stewart's puzzlement over Dr. Swango's ability to "be granted an interview, let alone a position" as a medical resident despite his conviction can be explained by the fact that, although competition to obtain places in American medical schools remains keen, there are three postgraduate training positions, or residencies, for every two graduates of an American medical school. Residencies are probably the least competitive training positions in medicine, a result of our reliance on postgraduate trainees to provide basic medical care. Because this practice is particularly common in large, urban medical centers, it has come under criticism recently for its contribution to the maldistribution of physicians in this country.

WALLACE A. GLEASON, JR., M.D.
Professor of Pediatrics
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Houston, Texas

In South Dakota, one of the places where Michael Swango found work after his conviction for battery, doctors are treated as if they were above reproach, because they are so scarce. I once interviewed a Dakota farmer who had gone into the hospital for minor surgery but had come out with Legionnaires' disease, and had had to retire early and spend the rest of his life on oxygen. He refused to sue, he said, because "we would end up losing our community hospital and probably the doctors, too," and he added that the next available doctor was more than a hundred miles away. Swango's supervisors in Ohio may have feared legal ramifications from his actions, but here, where medical-malpractice suits are rare, it's "Let the buyer beware."

BILL THOMAS
Draper, S.D.

As a member of Stony Brook's psychiatry department, I remember the storm of controversy and embarrassment when the department discovered Michael Swango's past. But this only confirms what I teach medical students and residents: given the right circumstances and a skillful psychopath, almost anyone can be conned.

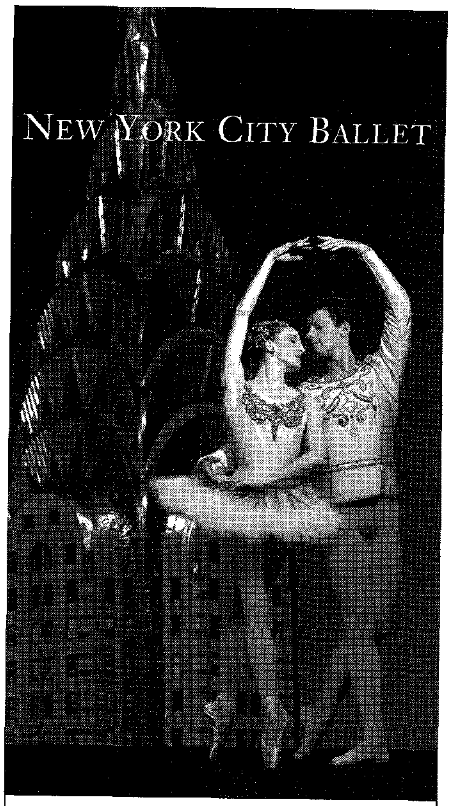
MICHAEL SCHWARTZ, M.D.
Director, Psychiatry Residency Training
SUNY-Stony Brook
Huntington, N.Y.

A LUCE WOMAN

Clare Boothe Luce may have kept her notes of her LSD experiences secret, as Kurt Andersen reported in "Speak, Memory" (November 24th), but she was quite willing to discuss her acid trips. At the 1972 Republican Convention, as Abbie Hoffman and I were riding in an elevator with Mrs. Luce, Abbie, in his inimitable manner, tried to unhinge her by asking if she'd ever "dropped acid." To our surprise, she told us about a trip she'd taken with Aldous Huxley. Before disappearing into the crowded lobby, she added that, though she had gained little insight from her experience, she thought that psychedelic drugs had a great future.

ANDRÉA R. VAUCHER
Santa Monica, Calif.

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com or faxed to 212-840-8489. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.



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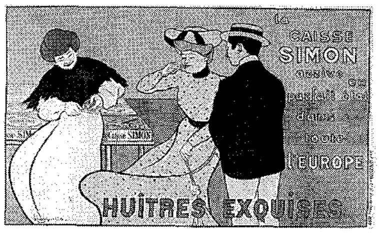

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The Capeman—A musical by Paul Simon and Derek Walcott, directed and choreographed by Mark Morris. In previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Century City—A baseball player is accused of rape in this legal drama by Mark Lee, starring Ellen Parker and Dennis Ryan. In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 205-0523.)

June Moon—The Drama Dept.'s encore production of Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman's 1929 comedy, about a Tin Pan Alley songwriter. Mark Nelson is the director. In previews. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Ragtime—Terrence McNally (book) and Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens (score) have adapted E. L. Doctorow's 1975 novel for the stage. Frank Galati is the director. In previews. (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

The Shoulder—Writer and director Dan Hurlin and composer Dan Moses Schreier's chamber opera was inspired by a 1994 newspaper report about a man who, unable to renew his driver's license because of poor vision, drove his riding lawnmower for forty-one days across the state of Iowa to tend to his sick brother. Opens Jan. 1 at 8 and runs, Wednesdays through Saturdays, through Jan. 17. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

Signature Theatre Company—The Arthur Miller season continues with two one-acts, "I Can't Remember Anything" and "The Last Yankee," directed by Joseph Chaikin. In previews. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Bashevis: Tales of I. B. Singer—Three of Isaac Bashevis Singer's stories ("A Quotation from Klopstock," "The Yearning Heifer," and "A Wedding in Brownsville"), beguilingly told by the actor David Margulies, alone onstage. For those who are familiar with Singer, the performance brings fresh life to his wise and funny tales of Jewish intellectuals in Europe and America; for those who aren't, the writer's sharp-eyed compassion should be a revelation in itself. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

Christmas at the Ivanovs'—If the holiday were Halloween, this play would be the trick. Alexander Vvedensky intended his 1938 absurdist farce to address the bogs of bureaucracy and the perils of Stalinist terror; Classic Stage Company and Arden Party's co-staging (of a new translation) is a muddle of dirty jokes and overdirection. There are flashes of good acting (particularly from Ledlie Borgerhoff) and of real humor, but not enough to redeem the production. Directed by Karen Coonrod. (C.S.C., 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Jan. 4.)

Cyrano de Bergerac—Frank Langella directs, and dons the schnozz in, his own adaptation of Rostand's romantic drama, from a translation by Brian Hooker. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Defying Gravity—Take a step back from Jane Anderson's impressionistic play about the 1986 Challenger disaster and you see a lovely rendering of man's desire to be part of something infinite. This is a thoughtful, affecting work, with fine performances by everyone in the cast. Michael Wilson directed, with a deft touch. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

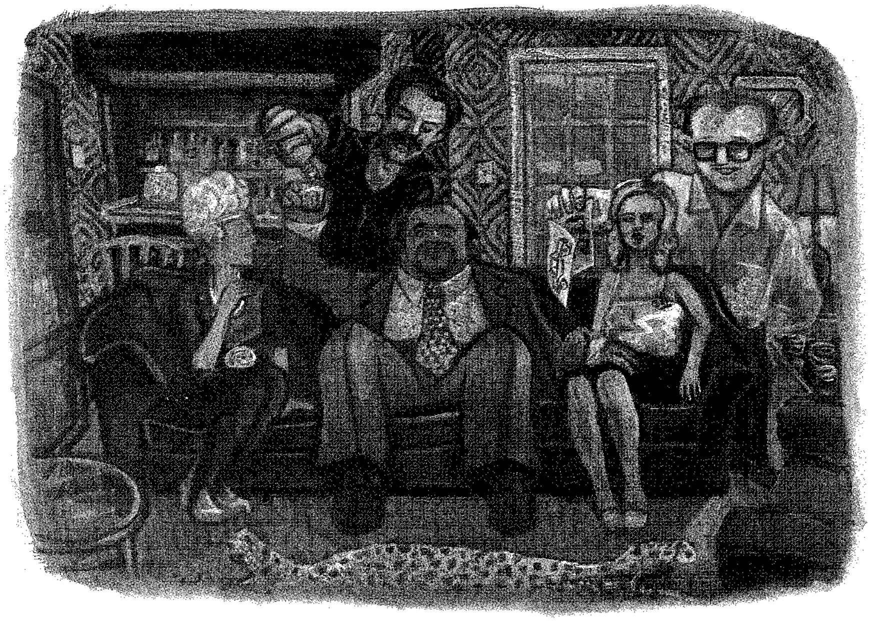
The Diary of Anne Frank—This revival of the 1955 play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett aims for realism and historical scrupulousness: the new adaptation, by Wendy Kesselman, dispenses with the creaky devices of the original and adds material that Anne's father, Otto Frank, edited out of the first published version of the diary. There may be much to admire about the production—theatrically, it's an improvement, and the cast, under the direction of James Lapine, is generally fine—but the play's realism is also its fundamental flaw: its attempt to re-create Anne Frank's experience literally, to show us "what it was like," represents a failure of imagination. Accuracy is not a substitute for truth—and one of the truths we take away from Anne's diary is that we *can't* know what it was like. With George Hearn, Sophie Hayden, Harris Yulin, Austin Pendleton, and, as Anne, Natalie Portman, who looks the part but has a stiff and studied girlishness. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/15/97.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Goose-Pimples—In Mike Leigh's 1981 play, set in the pathetic zebra-striped bachelor pad of a London car salesman, a group of striving friends (keenly played by Max Baker, Gillian Foss, Sam Rockwell, and Caroline Seymour) can't help projecting their hopes and their bitterness onto a non-English-speaking Arab (Adam Alexi-Malle), who's with them only because of an accident of miscommunication anyway. Under the clear-eyed direction of Scott Elliott, the New Group brings a near-excruciating realism to Leigh's bleakly comic portrayal of the cruelty disappointment can inspire. At the end of the play's two and a half hours—it takes place virtually in real time—you'll feel lucky to have lived through it. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Jan. 18.)

I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!—A mean little cocktail from Sandra Bernhard, composed of equal parts stand-up, performance art, cabaret, world-weariness, and dish. Although the cracks in the plaster holding her many selves together sometimes reveal an unexpected vulnerability and gentleness, she maintains complete control from her spike-heeled perch. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 307-7171.)

The Irish . . . and How They Got That Way—A good-natured if somewhat choppy revue by Frank McCourt, performed by a versatile and charming cast of six singers and musicians. Deftly directed by Charlotte Moore. (Chelsea Playhouse, 125 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Jan. 4.)

Ivanov—Because American actors have trouble inhaling the nihilistic ozone of Chekhov, Gerald Gutierrez's production looks authentic but doesn't feel it. Kevin Kline powerfully conveys the honesty and intelligence of the title character but not his raw, nervy, spiritually deracinated mood of decline. (12/1/97) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 4.)



The New Group's staging of Mike Leigh's "Goose-Pimples."

It's the powerful silence of a sunrise. It's a sound-dampened cabin that lets you and a friend talk over old times instead of talking over the engine. It's 3.2 liters

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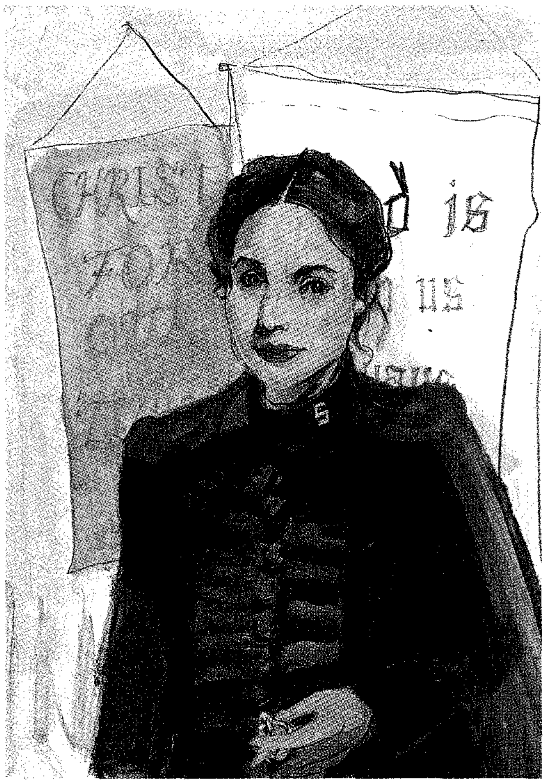
Jackie—A complete delight. The playwright, Gip Hoppe, may be satirizing what we think we know about the former First Lady, but he does it with such heart and high comedy that you may not want to leave the theatre. Margaret Colin leads the gifted cast, and Hoppe, who also directed, is aided and abetted in this zaniness by the set designer David Gallo. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)



Melissa Errico, in "Major Barbara."

The Last Session—A musical by Steve Schalchlin (music and lyrics) and Jim Brochu (book), about an AIDS-afflicted songwriter's final studio work. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

The Lion King—The director Julie Taymor has created a theatrical event far more textured and original than the animated film, submerging the audience in a mythic universe; it's like being in a dream awake. The show's high visual style, however, is in sharp contrast to its low verbal one. Garth Fagan is the choreographer. (11/24/97) (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Major Barbara—Shaw's often maligned disquisition on faith, money, and the good uses of hypocrisy has received a spectacular, fast, and funny revival at the hands of Tony Walton, the director and designer of this Irish Repertory Theatre production. The uniformly wonderful cast includes Melissa Errico, Boyd Gaines, Jack Ryland, and Rob Sedgwick. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Jan. 4.)

Marc Salem's Mindgames—The mind reader shows off his telepathic feats. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Mojo—Two parts Mamet, one part Pinter, and a smattering of Shepard, mixed together by the young Briton Jez Butterworth, whose characters converse in a flashy, garbled Cockney that's as unreal as the story's premise. Neil Pepe is the director. (12/1/97) (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Closes Jan. 17.)

Never the Sinner—John Logan's 1985 play about Leopold and Loeb, the teen-age millionaires who murdered a child in Chicago in 1924, sweeps its audience into the boys' friendship without ever losing sight of the brutal murder—a balancing act that Mr. Logan and the director, Ethan McSweeny, carry off seamlessly. They lay out the furor and the legal maneuvering surrounding this "trial of the century" particularly well, suggesting (though the play was written a decade before the O.J. case) that nothing much has changed. Jason Patrick Bowcutt and Michael Solomon are beautifully matched and utterly convincing as the killers; Robert Hogan, as their attorney, Clarence Darrow, is a winning combination of the humane and the calculating. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes Jan. 4.)

The Old Neighborhood—David Mamet's three elegant, autobiographical one-act plays full of laughter and lament. Well acted by Peter Riegert, Patti LuPone, Vincent Guastaferro, Rebecca Pidgeon, and Jack Willis, and crisply directed by Scott Zigler. Serious, beautiful, and short: an almost impossible feat these days on Broadway. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Pearls for Pigs—Thank God for the avant-garde dramatist Richard Foreman. His latest play, while ostensibly nonsensical, is exhilarating, sad, hilarious, and frightening (and actually more meaningful than much of what's out there). David Patrick Kelly is wonderful as the Maestro (clearly the playwright's alter ego), an artist in crisis who immediately declares that he hates the theatre. The rest of the cast executes Foreman's finely choreographed "impulsive" theatre (as he calls it) with dreamlike precision. The experience is akin to falling down Alice's rabbit hole: the next day your brain is sore in places you haven't used in a long time. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 279-4200. Closes Jan. 4.)

Pride's Crossing—A ninety-year-old woman who once swam the English Channel (Cherry Jones) relives the stages of her life, in Tina Howe's new play, directed by Jack O'Brien. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Proposals—Neil Simon's new play is set at the summer home of a family that has been disrupted by divorce and is about to be further shaken by death. Although the wisecracks rely on Catskills-era ethnic stereotypes from which all the humor has long been drained, there is real feeling here—a softly sad, end-of-summer feeling—and it's brought out very capably by L. Scott Caldwell, who plays the family's longtime housekeeper, and by Dick Latessa, as a divorced father who's still in love with his former wife. Directed by Joe Mantello. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Scarlet Pimpernel—This new musical, based on the Baroness Orczy novel, has a lot going for it (if you don't count its music and lyrics, which are dreadful and appalling, respectively): its charismatic star, Douglas Sills, Andrew Jackness's sets, and Jane Greenwood's costumes. Peter Hunt directed. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

The School for Scandal—A Pearl Theatre Company staging of Sheridan's 1777 comedy of manners. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

The Seagull: The Hamptons, 1990s—Jeff Cohen's adaptation completely revamps Chekhov's characters and their words, and in this rare instance that strategy is brilliant: "The Seagull" is so familiar that one can easily lapse into thinking that its primary virtue is the author's theatrical genius and not the insight into love, ambition, and self-deception that the play can still offer. Here, with current references and without period costumes, and under Cohen's thoughtful direction, the drama's emotional and intellectual core is clear, and its underlying strength is startling. Marin Hinkle, as Nina, Darius Stone, as Medvedenko, and Michael Hobbs, as Dr. Dorn, are terrific; the rest of the cast is mixed. (Theatre 3, 311 W. 43rd St. 279-4200. Closes Jan. 4.)

Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know—A comic revue inspired by the Fodor's handbook of the same title. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

1776—Scott Ellis's lean, lively production of Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone's still fresh 1969 musical about the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. (9/8/97) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

The Show Goes On—Lyricist-librettist Tom Jones and composer Harvey Schmidt star in a revue of their songs. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820. Closes Jan. 18.)

Side Show—A promising premise for a musical—the story of Violet and Daisy Hilton, Siamese twins who grew up in the world of carnivals and became a vaudeville act in the thirties—flattened by bombastic shlock rock, an unimaginative set, and a book that reduces the sisters' entire existence to a pulp-romance plot. Nevertheless, most of the actors manage to carry themselves with dignity. (11/3/97) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Street Corner Symphony—A revue of some thirty songs, mostly from the sixties and seventies, which turns into a real beltfest at times. When the eight cast members tone things down a bit and do some harmonizing, though, you recognize what the show could have been. Conceived, choreographed, and staged by Marion J. Caffey. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Sunshine Boys—A revival of Neil Simon's comedy about two irascible old vaudevillians which provides a double dose of nostalgia: the tour guides for this trip to a bygone era of show biz are Ye Olde Odd Couple of television, Tony Randall and Jack Klugman. While there are some very funny lines, the production is somehow lacking in chemistry. The sandpapery friction that the twosome created so successfully on TV isn't much in evidence—they seem reduced to lovability. That's not a crime, but this production is definitely for those who prefer a warm cup of cocoa to a brisk toboggan ride. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Three Days of Rain—There's a deeply felt, unutterable sadness at the core of Richard Greenberg's play, in which three no longer young people try to sort out the legacy left to them by their parents. Every element of this production, which was directed by Evan Yionoulis, rings true. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Jan. 11.)

Triumph of Love—A musical adaptation of the 1732 Marivaux farce which brims with intelligence, feeling, musicality, and wit. The characters are more or less stock types, but the actors bring them to full ripeness. Michael Mayer directed. (11/3/97) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Two Pianos, Four Hands—With the Canadian keyboardists Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

A View from the Bridge—Michael Mayer directs Anthony LaPaglia, Allison Janney, and Stephen Spinella in the Roundabout's revival of Arthur Miller's modern tragedy. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Visiting Mr. Green—Eli Wallach portrays a Jewish widower, in a drama by Jeff Baron. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

The Yeomen of the Guard—Presented by the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Closes Jan. 4.)

LONG RUNS

AS BEES IN HONEY DROWN: Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FOREVER TANGO:** Walter Kerr, 219

W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. (Closes Jan. 4.) . . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE:** Century, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **MERE MORTALS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Final performances of "The Nutcracker": Dec. 31 at 7, Jan. 2 at 8, Jan. 3 at 2 and 8, and Jan. 4 at 1 and 5. . . . ¶ The company kicks off the repertory portion of the winter season with a full-length "Jewels" on Jan. 6 at 8. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through March 1.)

Elizabeth Streb/Ringside—Last June, the MacArthur Foundation honored the daredevil choreographer with the action-comics movement vocabulary. (At rehearsals, she exhorts her dancers to "clump drop," "pop suck," and "fly splat," and that's pretty much what they do.) Other grants followed; the money has helped Streb create the mechanical marvels that make their début here. "When I was young, I always wanted this equipment," she says of her bungee contraption, her box-truss stage, her swivel-harness flying machine. In "Fly," veteran Ringsider Hope Clark is buckled onto a counterbalanced spoke that lets her dance on floor and ceiling with equal ease. "The existence of the floor is an impediment to inventing dance," Streb explains. "But it's pretty absolute, so it took me twenty years to see that." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Dec. 31 at 2 and 7:30, Jan. 1 at 8, Jan. 3 at 2 and 8, and Jan. 4 at 2.)

"Unfinished Symphony"—Yoshiko Chuma and the School of Hard Knocks provide a tag-team dance experience, with seven dancers and seven musicians performing interdisciplinary high jinks: the cellist does a soft-shoe with his instrument, the choreographer tries her hand at the violin, and so on. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Jan. 3-5 at 8:30. Through Jan. 11.)

"The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare"—Great Small Works' dance-and-performance adaptation, choreographed by Clarinda Mac Low, of the G. K. Chesterton novel about an anarchist conspiracy foiled by police infiltrators. The company's customary pasta repast follows the performance. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Dec. 31-Jan. 4 at 8:30.)

"A Tribute to Jeff Duncan (1930-89)"—Two works by the choreographer who founded Dance Theatre Workshop, "Diminishing Landscape" (1967) and "La Mesa del Brujo" (1980), and a whimsical elegy by Kathy Wildberger and Sean Curran, "Sean and Kathy in Grand Canyon with Jeff and Arnie." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Jan. 4 at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

George Clinton and the P-Funk All-Stars—Forget Guy Lombardo. Few entertainers are better qualified to host a year-end blowout than the captain of the world's funkiest battleship. Scoff at the other parties—Dr. Funkenstein is in the house. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center. 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Dec. 31 at 8.)

Phish—Vermont's favorite laid-back, jam-happy combo. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Dec. 31 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Arlene Grocery, 95 Stanton St., between Ludlow and Orchard Sts. (358-1633)—A narrow, dimly lit renovated bodega that's the perfect generic environment for three to five unknown bands each night trying to escape obscurity.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Dec. 31: **BUSTER POINDEXTER AND HIS SPANISH ROCKETSHIP BAND.** Jan. 3: Those pounding tomtoms, those sinewy maracas, that distorted, fuse-blowing guitar. Call it hambone, call it shave and a haircut, two bits, call it anything you want—it's still going to be the **BO DIDDLEY** beat. And once it gets you in its clutches it's impossible to shake loose.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Dec. 31: **CHAVEZ,** a kind of indie-rock supergroup, featuring former members of Live Skull and Bullet LaVolta. The band is best heard in a club; its canny, artful intensity provides arena-size bliss. With **THEE PRISSTEENS.**

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. Dec. 31: Erik Sanko, the front man for **SKELETON KEY,** has worked with such desperadoes as John Lurie, Gavin Friday, and John Waite, but his own raunchy material sounds a bit like Nirvana meets Tom Waits. With the **JESUS LIZARD.** . . . ¶ Next door, at CB's Gallery, up-and-coming Boston singer-songwriter **MARTIN SEXTON** also holds forth on Dec. 31.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dec. 31: **BUDDY MILES,** the journeyman singer, drummer, and left-handed, upside-down guitarist à la Hendrix, whom Miles joined in Band of Gypsys a year before the end.

Don Hill's, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little SoHo bar with an above-average P.A. system and topnotch local bands on the docket. Friday night is SqueezeBox, a vinyl-and-velvet gay glamfest, hosted by Misstress Formika.

Downtime, 251 W. 30th St. (695-2747)—A friendly split-level bar with a dazzling quasi-Cubist paint job and an above-average pool table.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

The Greatest Bar on Earth, 1 World Trade Center (524-7000)—Hyperbole, perhaps, but it's certainly the highest. And Thursdays through Saturdays you'll find live music, dancing, and dining, a hundred and seven stories above the city.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Despite the glitz on the way in, this old Polish-veterans' hall is rather plain and cramped. But the bands (not to mention their labels) seem to love it, and the electricity of a good set can surprise you. Dec. 31: **MACEO PARKER,** James Brown's soulful saxman, rings in the New Year. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Dec. 31: The **LOUNGE LIZARDS.** Having sworn off acting, John Lurie has turned his attention back to his "fake-jazz" collective; this high-profile New Year's performance should be something of a musical resolution. Jan. 1: A theme evening called "An End to Privacy?," with live cell-phone-conversation sampler Scanner, a performance piece by Karen Finley, and a screening of Yoko Ono's 1969 film "Rape." Jan. 3: Getting down just for the funk of it are downtown stars **JOHN ZORN, MARC RIBOT,** and **JOHN MEDESKI,** the last an honorary South-of-Houston-Streeter taking a busman's holiday from his trio, Medeski, Martin, and Wood.

Life, 158 Bleecker St. (420-1999)—A former house producer and writer for Stax, **ISAAC HAYES** (Dec. 31) was responsible for such Sam & Dave hits as "Soul Man" and "When Something Is Wrong with My Baby." He later put out a series of gritty funk albums culminating, of course, in the multiplatinum, Academy Award-winning "Shaft." Bad films and uneven records followed, but he made a stunning comeback in 1995 with two fine disks: "Branded" and the instrumental "Movement—Raw and Refined."

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—A medium-sized, brick-walled haven of a back room where, no matter who's onstage, the listening is a pleasure. Dec. 31: The "suave and sybaritic" (by their own description) **COMBUSTIBLE EDISON,** the most convincing of the current cocktail-lounge sophisticates. Their music is a kitschy libation consisting of equal parts vibraphone, Farfisa organ, Melodica, bossa-nova bongos, surf guitar (played by a besuited James Bond type called the Millionaire), and torchy

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RADIO WEST 43RD STREET

Thirty favorites from our 1997 album-oriented playlist.

OK Computer, Radiohead (Capitol).
Supa Dupa Fly, Missy (Misdeameanor) Elliott (The Gold Mind/Eastwest).
Brighten the Corners, Pavement (Matador).
Music from the Motion Picture "Boogie Nights," Various Artists (Capitol).
Time Out of Mind, Bob Dylan (Columbia).
When I Was Born for the 7th Time, Cornershop (Luaka Bop).
The Velvet Rope, Janet Jackson (Virgin).
Hawaii, the High Llamas (V2).
Wu-Tang Forever, Wu-Tang Clan (Loud/RCA).
Blur, Blur (Virgin).
Trailer Park, Beth Orton (Dedicated).
I Can Hear the Heart Beating as One, Yo La Tengo (Matador).
If You're Feeling Sinister, Belle and Sebastian (Enclave).
Dig Your Own Hole, the Chemical Brothers (Astralwerks).
Whatever and Ever Amen, Ben Folds Five (Sony 550).
Other Songs, Ron Sexsmith (Interscope).
"Curtains," Tindersticks (London).
Earthling, David Bowie (Virgin).
Homework, Daft Punk (Virgin).
Middle of Nowhere, Hanson (Mercury).
Portishead, Portishead (London).
The Fat of the Land, Prodigy (Maverick).
Anokha: Soundz of the Asian Underground, Various Artists (Quango/Island).
Dots and Loops, Stereolab (Elektra).
Homogenic, Björk (Elektra).
The Carnival, Wyclef Jean (Columbia).
Soundtracks for Living, The Gentle People (Rephlex).
In It for the Money, Supergrass (Capitol).
Bitter Sweet, Kim Richey (Mercury/Nashville).
Pop, U2 (Island).

vocals courtesy of Miss Lily Banquette. With the atmospheric gloom of **CONGO NORVELL.**

LES POULETS, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Dining.

S.O.B.'S, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Dec. 31: **TITO PUENTE,** the grand old man of salsa. Rhythmic excitement is guaranteed: this guy's timbales could make a polka band swing. Don't bother requesting the Puente-cum-Santana hit "Oye Como Va"—chances are it's already on the set list. Dining.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Dec. 31: **GEORGE PORTER, JR.,** longtime bassist of the Meters, with his band **RUNNIN' PARDNERS.** Opening the evening are local heavy funksters **MILO Z.** Jan. 2: The old-school rapper **KRS-ONE.** Jan. 3-4: After a good two years in the slammer, **RICK JAMES** is no longer the superfreak he used to be. Incarceration has done wonders for his live shows, however: where once he relied on lascivious chaos, his concerts now have the man-in-a-uniform precision of mid-eighties Prince.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Dec. 31: **STRANGEFOLK,** out of Burlington, Vermont, ring in the new year with their extended-jam world view.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through Jan. 3: **ANDREA MARCOVICCI.** Dining.

ARTHUR'S TAVERN, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and Johnny Parker, Fridays and Saturdays to the Freddy Francis trio, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

BIRDLAND, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—The **KEVIN MAHOGANY ALL-STARS** throw a party on Dec. 31. A big man with lungs to match, Mahogany shouts blues, croons ballads, scats bebop, and does everything else a jazz singer has to do to qualify as well rounded in the late twentieth century. Having found the right mixture of self-possession and friskiness, he's kicking some life back into a moribund art. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Dec. 31: It doesn't get more heterogeneous than a triple bill bringing together Chick Corea's new ensemble, **ORIGIN** (see below), vocalist-pianist **DIANA KRALL,** and Latin-jazz flutist **DAVE VALENTIN.** If Corea's keyboard flash and Valentin's propulsive flutework don't get you, Krall's sultry purr surely will. Through Jan. 4: **CHICK COREA AND ORIGIN.** A prior week of playing duets here with vibist Gary Burton should have sufficiently warmed up pianist Corea for this engagement with his newest band, a fully stocked, all-acoustic ensemble that includes bassist Avishai Cohen, drummer Adam Cruz, saxophonists Steve Wilson and Bob Sheppard, and trombonist Steve Davis. Dining.

CAFÉ PIERRE, 2 E. 61st St. (940-8185)—Vocalist-pianist **KATHLEEN LANDIS** performs the music of Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, starting Jan. 2, **EARTHA KITT.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** works her customary wizardry at the keyboard through Jan. 3. If you're going for the music rather than the conviviality, it's wisest to arrive on the early side, though on nights when the room grows a tad rowdy with the passing hours Carroll turns inward and plays on unfazed. Her repertoire is apparently endless, her bearing unfailingly elegant, and her jazz-meets-cabaret pianism the subtlest and most intricate New York has to offer.

CITRON 47, at 401 W. 47th St. (397-4747)—A comfy living-room bistro in Hell's Kitchen. The **CHUCK WILSON** trio is out to show that Monday nights aren't just for big bands. Swing saxophonist Wilson's chamber-jazz threesome includes guitarist **HOWARD ALDEN,** a master of pre-bop idioms, and bassist **MURRAY WALL.** Dining.

DRUIDS, 736 10th Ave., at 50th St. (307-6410)—Dark and neighborhoody atmosphere; bar-and-grill fare. **WEBBER'S WAILERS**—bassist John Webber, organist Mike LeDonne, drummer Joe Farnsworth, and either Eric Alexander or Doug Lawrence, who alternate on tenor sax—is an ensemble intent on making Monday nights safe again for small groups.

FIFTY SEVEN FIFTY SEVEN, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Dining.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—It took him nearly thirty years, but **JOE HENDERSON** (through Jan. 4) is finally getting his due as one of the premier tenor saxophonists in jazz history, a major stylist who uses understatement and a penetrating tone to make his finer points. His recent recording of "Porgy and Bess" may not stand up to his near-peerless recent discography, but in performance his gorgeous sound wins out every time. Mondays belong to **LES PAUL.** Now eighty-two, the master guitarist and pioneer electronics inventor is a delightfully loose cannon. Besides playing silken-toned, eccentrically phrased lines with an ease that belies the passing decades, Paul schmoozes with his band, the crowd, the waiters, and anyone else who happens into the club. There's no more entertaining way to start the workweek. Dining.

JAZZ STANDARD, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—A new jazz establishment features some new jazz hopefuls. Through Jan. 4: Vocalist **VANESSA RUBIN.**

DUPUY-BERBERI

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. Dec. 31: Pianist **JUDY CARMICHAEL** strides like Fats Waller's long-lost daughter, and, in saxophonist **MIKE HASHIM,** she's got a partner hooked into her pre-swing groove. Guitarist **CHRIS FLORY,** a longtime veteran of Scott Hamilton's neo-swing band, is a perfect foil.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Jan. 5: The **OLIVER LAKE BIG BAND.** Lake is one versatile musican. A tart-toned saxophone virtuoso who could sustain an entire evening with his solo improvisations, he's also a big thinker with a taste for large ensembles that can show off his meaty compositions and his sure sense of coloring.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. Sixties girl-group veteran **DARLENE LOVE** is in through Jan. 3. **CAROL SLOANE** begins a two-week stint on Jan. 6. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Hilary Kole. Closed Mondays.

SMALLS, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—Up-and-coming players jamming late into the night. Jan. 1: Altoist **MYRON WALDEN** and his trio. Jan. 2-3: The **RICHIE VITALE** quintet. The **JASON LINDNER BIG BAND** holds court every Monday; the **LARRY GOLDINGS** trio has Tuesdays; and the **SAM YAHEL ORGAN QUARTET** is in each Wednesday.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. While the tenor still rules as the saxophone of choice, the alto is currently finding more than its usual share of champions, chief among them **KENNY GARRETT** (through Jan. 4). Despite a strong decade-plus résumé, including work with Art Blakey, Miles Davis, and Woody Shaw, Garrett has started to blossom as a distinctive player only in the past few years. In his neo-bop approach, he may not be radically different from the other alto contenders (Myron Walden, Greg Osby), but in his technical fluency and expressive power, he is. Skirting well-worn clichés, Garrett twists and turns pungent, airborne phrases until they take on a life apart from his horn. He may not change the face of jazz, but he's certainly restoring some needed passion to it. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club. Through Jan. 4: Clarinettist and musicologist **DR. MICHAEL WHITE,** a proud scion of New Orleans, celebrates the riches of jazz's first golden era. His exuberant renditions of classics by Armstrong, Bechet, King Oliver, and other Big Easy icons are sure to bring Southern sunshine to our wintry shores. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Since his boot-camp days with the late lamented drummer Art Taylor, altoist **ABRAHAM BURTON** (Dec. 31) has grown into his beefy tone: melodic considerations now balance his pedal-to-the-floor force and speed.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Dec. 31: When you reach the level of professionalism, consistency, and inspiration that pianist **JUNIOR MANCE,** saxophonist **JOE TEMPERLEY,** and bassist **EARL MAY** can boast, you deserve a place in the jazz pantheon. Dining.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"The Private Collection of Edgar Degas." Degas (1884-1917) amassed one of the finest collections of paintings, drawings, and prints of his day. (At one point he even considered forming his own museum.) It was dominated by the work of Ingres and Delacroix, the heroes of the artist's youth, but was also strong in Manet, Cassatt, Cézanne, Gauguin, and, of course, Degas. The show is valuable not only for the extraordinary quality of the art but also for the insight it provides into Degas's aesthetic temperament. Among the riches: Delacroix's "Count de Mornay's Apartment" and his portrait of Baron Schwiter, several portraits by Ingres, the London fragments of Manet's "Execution of Maximilian," and Gauguin's copy after Manet's "Olympia." Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "The Drawings of Filippino Lippi and His Circle." Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "Jackson Pollock: Early Sketchbooks and Drawings." Through Feb. 8. . . . ¶ An exhibition at the Costume Institute devoted to the work of Gianni Versace. Through March 22. . . . ¶ "King of the World: A Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle" and "Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era," two exhibitions celebrating Indian art. Through Feb. 8 and March 1, respectively. . . . ¶ "Francesco Clemente: Indian Watercolors." Through Feb. 8. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

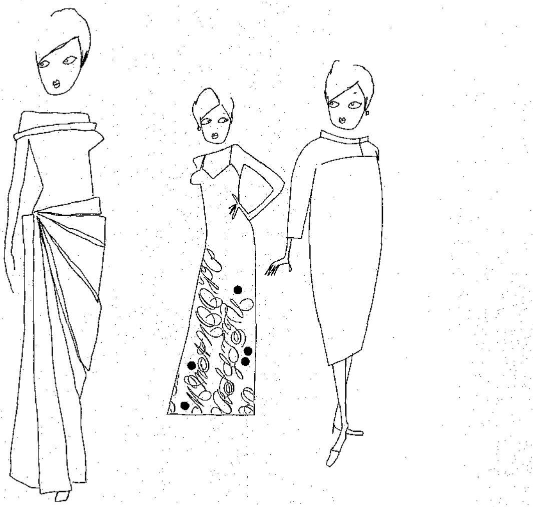
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Egon Schiele: The Leopold Collection, Vienna." (See also Galleries—Uptown, Short List.) Through Jan. 4. . . . ¶ "On the Edge: The Werner and Elaine Dannheisser Collection." Elaine Dannheisser, the colorful collector who butted heads with Morley Safer on the notorious "60 Minutes" segment trashing contemporary art, seems like an archetype of the eighties, a decade when patrons sometimes eclipsed artists. The collection she and her husband have donated to the museum does include important pre-eighties works—by Joseph Beuys, Lawrence Weiner, Carl Andre, and Robert Ryman, among others—but its standouts are by the stars of the Gordon Gekko years: Jeff Koons, Robert Gober, Anselm Kiefer, etc. Given the Modern's somewhat conservative reputation as a bastion of modernist aesthetics, the Dannheisser bequest is significant. Through Jan. 20. . . . ¶ "Deadpan," a video installation by Steve McQueen, in the Project Room. Through Feb. 10. . . . ¶ "Achille Castiglioni: Design!" Cutlery, spotlights, floor lamps, tractor seats, and other graceful items from the witty Italian designer. Through Jan. 6. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective" offers more than four hundred pieces from nearly half a century of work. At both Guggenheim venues, through Jan. 7. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—The museum's Rauschenberg retrospective continues here. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The Richard Diebenkorn retrospective presents examples from every phase of the California master's career, including early sketches and figure studies, fifties-era abstractions, landscapes from the sixties, the "Ocean Park" series, and the late collages. Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "The Warhol Look/Glamour Style Fashion." Through Jan. 18. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"The Nature of Diamonds" looks at many facets of the adamantine stone, from its birth in volcanic fissures to its eventual rise to the heads of heads of state (e.g., on the crown of Peter the Great, displayed in the exhibition's walk-in diamond vault). Through April 26. . . . ¶ "Drawing Shadows to Stone: Photographing North Pacific Peoples, 1897-1902." Through March 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)



"Fifty Years of Fashion," at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Monet and the Mediterranean" is an exquisite exhibition that shows the artist both on the brink of discovering the "serial procedure" that would become his signature and after having mastered it. The gardens and seascapes of Antibes radiate a delightful freshness; the opulence of the paintings of the Doge's Palace and the Palazzo Dario aflame in dying light is dazzling. Through Jan. 4. . . . ¶ "The Furniture of George Hunzinger: Invention and Innovation in Nineteenth Century America." Through Feb. 15. (Open Wednesday, Dec. 31, from 10 to 5; Thursday, Jan. 1, 11 to 6; Friday, Jan. 2, 10 to 8; Saturday, Jan. 3, 10 to 9; and Sunday, Jan. 4, 10 to 8.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse (718-681-6000)—"Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966-96" presents the work of fifty-one British nationals who offer diverse versions of the culture of their homeland. The exhibition extends to the Studio Museum in Harlem (144 W. 125th St., 864-4500) and the Caribbean Cultural Center (408 W. 58th St., 307-7420) and continues through March 15 at all three venues. (Open Wednesdays, 3 to 9; Thursdays and Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (849-8300)—"Design for Life: A Centennial Celebration," comprising selections from the treasure trove the museum has amassed over the past hundred years, sets out to demonstrate ways in which design permeates every aspect of our existence and expresses who and what we are. The show is a kind of flea-market paradise: you can find everything from a nineteenth-century chatelaine (attached to which are a sewing kit, a pair of eyeglasses, and a scent case) to a 1922 Soviet chess set called the Reds and the Whites (the white pawn is a sorrowful worker bound in chains, the red king a dignified proletarian) to Donald Deskey's charming 1940 design for the Sportshack, a prefabricated weekend cabin. Through Jan. 4. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5912)—"Torqued Ellipses," three new monumental sculptures by Richard Serra in Corten steel. For this series, Serra experimented with hitherto unknown techniques of rolling steel. While the results are characteristically massive, they achieve a quality of fluidity and movement which seems almost delicate. The sculptor has pulled off a most unlikely stunt: he's shown us something new. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5800)—"Fifty Years of Fashion: New Look to Now," a chronological exhibition that includes Christian Dior's 1947 New Look fashions; Chanel, Courrèges, Balenciaga, and other fifties haute couture; sixties youthquake looks; seventies hot pants and platform shoes; eighties spandex; and the most recent fads—retro, ethno, techno, boho, and go-go. Through Jan. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St. (838-6690)—"The Book Room: Georgia O'Keeffe's Library in Abiquiu" presents the artist's books, periodicals, and ephemera, including a copy of "Portrait of Mabel Dodge at Villa Curonia," presented to Alfred Stieglitz by its author, Gertrude Stein; a copy of Oscar Wilde's "The Ballad of Reading Gaol," pencilled throughout with Edward Steichen's Surrealist drawings; and O'Keefe's collection of books on Asian art, literature, and philosophy. Through Feb. 21. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (832-1155)—"Japanese Theatre in the World," an ambitious exhibition tracing the strands of classical drama—Bugaku, Noh, Kyogen, Bunraku, Kabuki—from the fourth century to the contemporary avant-garde. Through Feb. 1. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. (685-0008)—"Cultural Curios: Literary and Historical Witnesses" presents an assortment of personal items and collectibles, each with its own odd purchase on history: Lord Byron's ring, Lewis Carroll's pocket watch, Thoreau's pencil, a hank of hair from the tail of Robert E. Lee's horse. Through Jan. 4. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (869-8089)—"The Romanovs: Their Empire, Their Books" harks back to the days of the tsars and the illuminated books that were every bit as lavish as their more notorious hoards of art and jewelry. Salomon Room; through Feb. 28. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Most will be closed New Year's Day.)

Jean de Brunhoff (1899-1937)—The original wash drawings, with their familiar ink outlines, of the artist's 1939 children's book, "Babar and Father Christmas." Through Jan. 17. (Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669.)

Vincent Desiderio—Large figurative works in oil, nearly evenly divided between triptychs and grand single panels. The subjects seem to veer between a cool academicism (a studio floor covered with art-history manuals) and wrenching autobiography (the artist's hauntingly innocent young son, who suffers from hydrocephaly). In this case, technical mastery—the controlled palettes, the delicate alternation of outline and sfumato—doesn't veil the emotional urgency. Through Jan. 3. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays.)

Richard Fleischner—A small group of muted works in gouache on paper, which have been scraped and scratched and rubbed and washed to produce the look and feel of mottled age. Each of these exquisite fields has a geometric shape at the center—a Reinhardt grid within a black square, say, or, in one case, a simple maze—and, for all their restraint, they have a surprising sensuousness. Through Jan. 10. (Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227.)

Franz Kline (1910-62)—An engaging survey tracing the painter's artistic growth from the representational portraits and sketches of his twenties and thirties to the culmination of his exploration of Abstract Expressionism—the garish, hysterical "Scudera"—in the year before his death. Along with some of the stately, enigmatic black-and-white canvases on which his reputation rests are examples of his forays into color—which, one suspects, he was not entirely comfortable with. His works from the early fifties, in black ink and oil on the brittle pages of telephone books, are particularly appealing, combining the rapturous gesture of a Chinese calligrapher with the poignancy of the found object. Through Jan. 17. (Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870.)

An anonymous work in "Painted Press Prints," at Steven Kasher (see Photography).

Joan Nelson—Two large, dark fictive landscapes in acrylic and oil on wood, and dozens of tiny, meticulous ones on paper, rendered, variously, in acrylic ink, spray enamel, wax, and glitter. Some are based on paintings by other artists, like Claude Lorrain and George Caleb Bingham, and some on found images—from the junk store, the attic, the *Reader's Digest*. Their size gives them the innate appeal of all miniatures, which take you to places far away; it also reminds you just how far away the natural world has come to seem. Through Jan. 24. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454.)

Jonathan Shahn—Small, rough-hewn, boxlike sculptures, most of them made of plaster and illuminated, through squares of glass set into the top, by lamps suspended overhead. Each box encases a male head or figure (some of them marked up with pencil or crayon scratchings) that seems either too large, creating a feeling of suffocation, or, as in "Tiny Head in a Box," too small, creating a feeling of comic alienation. These inscrutable, almost abstract presences suggest nothing so much as prisons of the mind. Through Jan. 10. (O'Hara, 41 E. 57th St. 355-3330.)

"McEntee & Company"—A welcome reappraisal of the paintings and drawings of Jervis McEntee (1828-91), a Zelig of the Hudson River School, better known today for his friendships (protégé of Frederick Church, confidant of Sanford Gifford, travelling companion of Worthington Whittredge) than for his artistic output. Work by his chums is included for comparison. Through Jan. 17. (Beacon Hill Fine Art, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 734-3636.)

Short List—**DOUG ARGUE**, Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. 399-5510. Through Jan. 3. . . . **RICHARD BAKER**, Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. 397-6780. Through Jan. 17. . . . **JAN FRANK**, Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through Jan. 10. . . . **WILLIAM GROPPER**, ACA, 41 E. 57th St. 644-8300. Through Jan. 31. . . . **SOL LE WITT**, Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through Jan. 3. . . . **MARKUS LÜPERTZ**, Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Open Mondays; through Jan. 24. . . . **MARCELLO MONDAZZI**, Landon, 1926 Broadway, at 65th St. 721-8277. Through Jan. 11. . . . **TONY SMITH AND CHRISTOPHER WILMARTH**, Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through Jan. 24. . . . **SAUL STEINBERG**, Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. 861-7338. Through Feb. 7. . . . **TREVOR WINKFIELD**, De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050. Through Jan. 5.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Robert Longo—The artist's year-long drawing-a-day project demonstrates an impressive range of photorealist effects, lavished mostly on an all too familiar take on media saturation (the Munich Olympics, Janis Joplin, a burning cross, Tiger Woods). Through Jan. 10. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100.)

Andy Warhol (1927-87) / **Yayoi Kusama**—Wafting through the gallery, Warhol's famous mylar "Silver Clouds" (1966; these are a re-creation) are irresistible. Kusama's large sculpture, "A Snake" (1974), is a long floor piece made of the eccentric Japanese artist's characteristic phallic tendrils. A winning combination. Through Jan. 31. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460.)

"George Condo and William Burroughs: Collaborative Works"—Paintings, drawings, and a sculpture, made over an eight-year period at the late Beat legend's home in Lawrence, Kansas. The pictures freely combine abstract and representational elements in a manner that in recent years has grown very familiar. On the whole, they are not particularly characteristic of Condo's work, although the lush handling of paint suggests his technical virtuosity. The crudely expressionistic figurative elements seem more likely to have been Burroughs's contribution. The works are uneven, but, perhaps for extra-aesthetic reasons, many of them have an undeniable charm. Through Jan. 17. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. 727-7366.)

"Joan Mitchell/John Chamberlain: A Juxtaposition"—Paintings by Mitchell (1926-92), a second-generation Abstract Expressionist, and freestanding and wall-mounted crushed-auto-part sculptures by Chamberlain (b. 1927). The two are almost exact contemporaries, yet, despite their obvious affinities, her work seems to exhale the spirit of the fifties, whereas his, with its conspicuous reliance on readymade elements, is much more sixties. The large Chamberlain here, "Divine Ricochet" (1991), is floridly gorgeous. Through Jan. 10. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

Short List—**ERZSÉBET BAERVELDT**, I-20 Gallery, 529 W. 20th St. 645-1100. Through Jan. 10. . . . **GRACIELA HASPER**, Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Jan. 29. . . . **JAMES HILL**, Maynes, 529 W. 20th St. 741-3318. Through Jan. 28. . . . **SCOTT LYALL**, Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through Jan. 31. . . . **ERNESTO PUJOL**, Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. Through Jan. 31. . . . **CARRIE YAMAOKA**, Debs, 529 W. 20th St. 647-7080. Through Jan. 17.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Walter Anderson (1903-65) / **Charles Burchfield** (1893-1967)—Two artists who divided their allegiance between modernism and naturalism. Anderson is almost unknown beyond Mississippi's Gulf coast; this selection of watercolors offers a provocative taste. His brand of mad medieval geometry and Southern light is best seen in "Blue Crab," which shows the craggy creature scrambling over a bumpy rock. The better-known Burchfield seems to be along for the ride; at best, his bubbling landscapes provide a handy reference. Through Jan. 3. (Ross, 568 Broadway. 343-2161.)

Judie Bamber and **Kurt Kauper**—Bamber's intimate watercolors (titled simply by date and apparently all of the same man, sometimes accompanied by a small girl) have the banal, poignant quality of snapshots taken at the beach, in the living room, at the typewriter—documents both of loss and of remembrance. Interspersed are a pair of Kauper's large-scale, ambiguous "Diva Fiction" oil portraits, of what look like women to be reckoned with. Posed in brilliantly colored, beautifully draped gowns—camp Ingres—against vivid monochromatic backgrounds, they project the imperious remove of majestic birds. Through Jan. 10. (Gorney, 100 Greene St. 966-4480.)

Joseph Di Giorgio—Boldly composed oil-pastel landscapes of Prospect Park, each drawn six months after the season whose pageantries it depicts. The method gives the work a Wordsworthian piquancy: the Fauvist palette (lilac spring rain, lima-bean winter sky) looks truer than true when recollected in tranquillity. Through Jan. 10. (Steele, 420 West Broadway. 941-8388.)

Beatriz Milhazes—Striking oils with seductive contradictions. Decorative elements (roses, beadwork, crockery patterns, ribbon-edged hearts) cross the canvas with the boldness of a big, black Franz Kline stroke. Bright and unexpected colors (profound pinks, bursts of Day-Glo, concentric metallic shades) are layered or juxtaposed until they achieve placidity or the settled allure of age. Through Jan. 10. (Thorp, 103 Prince St. 431-6880.)

"Deep Skin Excursion: Early Work by Howard Fried"—Curated by Dennis Oppenheim, this show endeavors to resuscitate the reputation of a forgotten Conceptualist. Fried (b. 1946) focussed on installations and performances, some of which are documented here. In "The Burghers of Fort Worth" (1975), he drolly parodied art education: in art school, one interacts with several different "masters" at once; Fried took golf lessons with four different pros at once. Through Jan. 3. (Apex Art, 291 Church St. 431-5270.)

"Places That Are Elsewhere"—Slide, film, and video work by artists whose minds are not: Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt, Katy Schimert, Peter Campus, and Christopher Williams, among others. Through Jan. 17. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074.)

Short List—**JUAN ABREU**, Goldstein, 39 Wooster St. 431-0314. Through Jan. 10. . . . **MOE BROOKER**, June Kelly, 591 Broadway. 226-1660. Through Jan. 6. . . . **DANIEL HAUBEN**, Ingbar, 568 Broadway. 334-1100. Through Jan. 31. . . . **KANA & OLYMPIOS**, Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through Jan. 17. . . . **YVES KLEIN**, A/D, 560 Broadway. 966-5154. Through Jan. 10. . . . **SHERRY MARKOVITZ**, Knowlton, 568 Broadway. 966-2625. Through Jan. 24. . . . **JENNIFER MONICK**, First New York: Staff Gallery, 495 Broadway. 925-9700. Through Jan. 17. . . . **BEVERLY PEPPER**, Cowles, 420 West Broadway. 925-3500. Through Jan. 17. . . . **ULRICH RÜCKRIEM**, Ace, 275 Hudson St. 255-5599. Through Feb. 28. . . . **JULIÃO SARMENTO**, Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405. Through Jan. 24. . . . **PHILIP TAAFFE**, Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441. Through Jan. 31.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Coliseum Antiques Show—The folks at Stella Show Management have assembled some three hundred dealers for the benefit of consumers who have not made thrift a priority on their list of New Year's resolutions. (Columbus Circle. Jan. 3-4. For information, call 255-0020.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

"Living for the City"—Twenty years's worth of black-and-white photographs of New York City, by such artists as Geoffrey Biddle, Sid Kaplan, Jules Allen, Sylvia Plachy, Arlene Gottfried, and Richard Sandler. Through Jan. 15. (Parsons School of Design, 66 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. Open weekdays, 9 to 6.)

"Monk's World"—A well-worth-it group show for jazz lovers: forty black-and-white pictures of the legendary pianist and composer Thelonious Monk, alone and with such luminaries as Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, and Gerry Mulligan. Portraits of Coleman Hawkins, James P. Johnson, and Duke Ellington are also on view. The photographers include William Claxton, William Gottlieb, Herb Snitzer, and Lee Tanner. Through Jan. 11. (The Jazz Gallery, 290 Hudson St., at Spring St. 242-1063. Opens at 1; open Sundays.)

"1930s New York"—Vintage works by Berenice Abbott, Sol Prom, Liborio Justo, and Joseph Kaplan. Through Jan. 17. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

"Painted Press Prints, 1920s-1960s"—Retouched photographs that ran in newspapers and magazines around the world, most by anonymous artists and a handful by such photographers as Robert Capa, Dmitri Baltermants, and Roman Vishniac. Through Jan. 10. (Steven Kasher, 54 North Moore St. 966-3978. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6.)

"Paris, City of Light"—The city as muse, in the photographs of Bruce Cratsley, Todd Webb, and André Kertész. Through Jan. 3. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)

"Scene from Behind"—A playful group of images that, in one way or another, depict a posterior view. Among the artists are Helen Levitt, Lauren Greenfield, Louis Faurer, Lee Friedlander, and Leon Levinstein. Through Jan. 10. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767. Open Sundays, noon to 5.)

International Center of Photography—"Nelly: From Athens to New York, The Work of Elli Seraïdari." . . . ¶ "Images from the Machine Age: Selections from the Daniel Cowin Collection." Both shows through Feb. 22. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Weegee's World: Life, Death and the Human Drama," a two-hundred-picture exhibition that spans the tabloid photographer's career. Through March 8. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**ZEKE BERMAN,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220. Through Jan. 17. . . . **CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. 319-1996. Open Mondays; through Feb. 7. . . . **JOHN BRILL,** Kent, 67 Prince St. 966-4500. Through Jan. 17. . . . **JOHN COPLANS,** Rosen, 130 Prince St. 941-0203. Through Jan. 3. . . . **MARGARET COURTNEY-CLARKE** and **TESSA TRAEGER,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Both shows through Jan. 24. . . . **VALDIR CRUZ,** Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. 223-1059. Through Jan. 10. . . . **ANDREAS FEININGER,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through Jan. 24. . . . **BENEDICT J. FERNANDEZ,** Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051 Opens Saturdays at noon; through Jan. 24. . . . **SEIICHI FURUYA,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Through Jan. 3. . . . **ROBERT GLENN KETCHUM,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through Jan. 16. . . . **REBECCA LEPKOFF,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Jan. 17. . . . **DANNY LYON,** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through Jan. 18. . . . **DIANA MICHENER,** Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Through Jan. 17. . . . **MARVIN E. NEWMAN,** De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through Jan. 25. . . . **FRED STEIN** and **PETER LOEWY,** Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Both shows through Jan. 3. . . . **BERT STERN,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223. Through Jan. 10. . . . **KUNIÉ SUGIURA,** Tonkonow, 601 W. 26th St. 255-8450. Through Jan. 10.

(See the museum listings for a photography exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

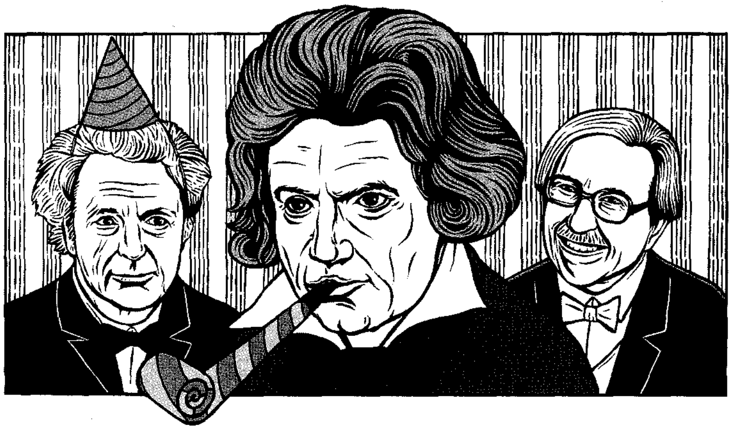
OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA,** with Vesselina Kasarova, Bruce Ford, Dwayne Croft, Paul Plishka, Simone Alaimo, and—it being New Year's Eve—many surprise guests making cameo appearances in the Act Two lesson scene; conducted by Edoardo Müller. (Dec. 31 at 7:30.) . . . With Enric Serra instead of Mr. Plishka, and no additional guests. (Jan. 3 at 8.) . . . **DON CARLO,** with Marina Mescheriakova, Dolora Zajick, Luis Lima, Thomas Hampson, James Morris, and Vladimir Ognovenko; Myung Whun Chung. (Jan. 1 at 7.) . . . **PETER GRIMES,** with Patricia Racette, Philip Langridge, and Alan Opie; David Atherton. (Jan. 2 at 8.) . . . With Carolyn James, Chris Merritt, and Mr. Opie; Mr. Atherton. (Jan. 5 at 8.) . . . **BORIS GODUNOV,** with Olga Borodina, Sergej Larin, Constantin Plujnikov, Sergei Leiferkus, and Samuel Ramey; Valery Gergiev. (Jan. 3 at 1.) . . . With Vladimir Galouzine instead of Mr. Larin. (Jan. 6 at 7:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

Amato Opera Company—Final performances of "Die Fledermaus." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Jan. 3 at 7:30 and Jan. 4 at 2:30. . . . **NOTE:** On Jan. 3 at 11:30 and 2:30, the company presents family performances of Seymour Barab's "Little Red Riding Hood.")

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Valery Gergiev conducting. Dec. 31 at 8: A New Year's Eve gala concert comprising selections from Tchaikovsky's "The Sleeping Beauty," the Prelude to Mussorgsky's "Khovanshchina," seductive arias from "Samson et Dalila" and "Carmen" (with mezzo-soprano Olga Borodina), devilish arias from "Faust" and "La Damnation de Faust" (with bass Samuel Ramey), Ravel's G-Major Piano Concerto (with Alexander Toradze), and selections from Bizet's "L'Arlésienne." . . . ¶ Jan. 2-3 and Jan. 5 at 8: Mahler's Symphony No. 6. (875-5030.)



Pianist Anton Kuerti and conductor Jens Nygaard celebrate New Year's Eve with a friend, in concerts by the Jupiter Symphony.

Jupiter Symphony—Music by Johann Strauss, Jr., always qualifies as New Year's fare; at some point in the not too distant past, Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos emerged as year-end repertoire, too. (Both are well represented this week.) Beethoven, though, is a bit of a departure—but, hey, why not do it up big for the ultimate live-it-up night? In this New Year's Eve marathon (in two segments, with a dinner break in between), Jens Nygaard leads his orchestra in all five of Beethoven's piano concertos, featuring the distinguished pianist Anton Kuerti, who was born in Vienna but is now a dual citizen of the United States and Canada (where he resides, and where he once ran for a seat in Parliament). Dec. 31 at 5: The Concertos No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4. . . . ¶ At 9: The Concertos No. 1 and No. 5, plus the "Creatures of Prometheus" Overture. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. . . . **NOTE:** Separate tickets are required for the two installments.)

Manhattan School of Music Chamber Sinfonia—Glen Barton Cortese leads a wide-ranging "Concert for Peace," with input from soprano Sylvia McNair, tenor Jon Fredric West, jazz trumpeter Jimmy Owens, gospel singer Theresa Thomason, and the New York Festival Singers. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Dec. 31 at 7:30. No tickets necessary for general seating; for information about reserved seating, call 662-2133.)

Amor Artis—The chorus and orchestra, directed by Johannes Somary, performs Bach's Violin Concerto in E Major, his Cantatas No. 79 and No. 118, and his Mass in F Major, in addition to Vivaldi's motet "Lauda Jerusalem" and his Concerto for Two Mandolins and Orchestra. (St. Jean Baptiste Church, Lexington Ave. at 76th St. Dec. 31 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-4513.)

New York Pops—This year, the city of Vienna, which consolidates its reputation as the classical-music capital of New Year's celebrations with international telecasts of the Vienna Philharmonic's annual *Neujahrskonzert*, is lending its blessing to similar events in various North American cities, including New York, Pittsburgh, Denver, Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Toronto. New Yorkers get to hear Skitch Henderson lead his orchestra in plenty of Strauss waltzes, several operetta excerpts (featuring the Viennese soprano Patricia Nessy), and a few numbers spotlighting the Austrian zither virtuoso Peter Schwarz. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Jan. 1 at 2:30.)

RECITALS

458 Strings—The ensemble of Baroque keyboard and stringed-instrument specialists is joined by soprano Jessica Tranzillo and countertenor Drew Minter for four hours of seventeenth-century music. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Dec. 31 at 6. For information about tickets, call 922-9393.)

Bargemusic—Dec. 31 at 7:30: Twenty-one musicians and their sometimes substantial instruments (including a harpsichord) crowd onto the stage of this floating concert hall to welcome the new year with Bach's six "Brandenburg" Concertos. . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 7:30 and Jan. 4 at 4: Violinists Ida Levin and Carmit Zori, violist Robert Rinehart, and cellist Fred Sherry play string quartets by Brahms (in A Minor) and Beethoven (in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

Nari Matsuura and **Pamela Goldberg**—The pianists share a program, with Ms. Matsuura performing virtuoso works by Liszt and Chopin, and Ms. Goldberg offering Mozart's Sonata in B-Flat Major (K. 507). (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Jan. 4 at noon.)

North/South Consonance—The instrumentalists perform works for mixed chamber ensembles by Francis Thorne and Leo Kraft (each of whom is celebrating his seventy-fifth birthday this season), in addition to

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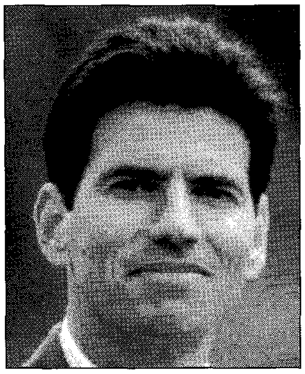

Meet nutrition expert Robert Pritikin when he discusses and signs copies of *The Pritikin Weight Loss Breakthrough*, his revolutionary new five-step plan to outsmart the craving for fatty foods.

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Tuesday, January 6th, 7:30-8:30 PM
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33 East 17th Street
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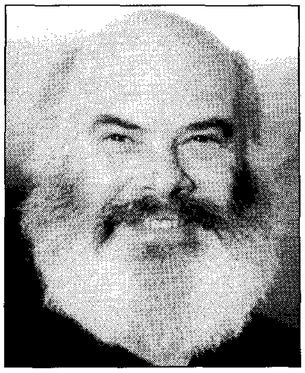

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pieces by Howard Rovics, Bernard Allen Schulz, and Max Lifchitz (the group's director). (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Jan. 4 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

EVANGELINE BENEDETTI AND HARRIET WINGREEN—The cellist and the pianist perform sonatas by Debussy and Shostakovich, and Ms. Benedetti offers Bach's Unaccompanied Cello Suite No. 6. (West End Collegiate Church, West End Ave. at 77th St. Jan. 4 at 3:30. No tickets necessary.)

ALL SEASONS CHAMBER PLAYERS—Presenting works by Brahms, Ferdinand Ries, Gabriel Pierné, and John Ireland. (Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Ave. at 73rd St. Jan. 4 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

SALON SOIRÉES—Soprano Rea Hagiwara, violinist Zoran Jakovcic, and pianist Eleonor Bindman team up for a Baroque program that includes pieces by Bach and Handel. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Jan. 4 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

DAWN UPSHAW AND THE AULOS ENSEMBLE—Before the Metropolitan Museum takes down its Neapolitan Christmas tree—the one famously bedecked with eighteenth-century decorations—it offers a final evening of seasonal attractions. In these concerts, Ms. Upshaw is featured in soprano arias from the "Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach" (which Johann Sebastian assembled for the instruction and amusement of his second wife), and the period-instrument players offer works by Couperin and Corrette. (Medieval Sculpture Hall, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 570-3949. Jan. 4 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

REA HAGIWARA AND ELEONOR BINDMAN—The soprano and the pianist perform songs and arias by Schubert, Wolf, and others. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Jan. 5 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

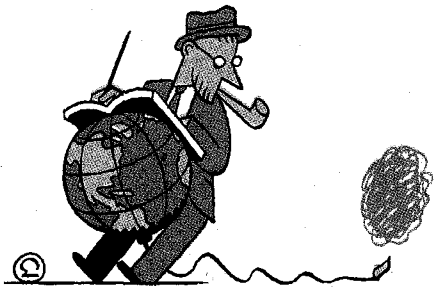
NEW YEAR'S EVE—For teetotallers on tight budgets, a First Night New York '98 button provides entry to such entertainment options as a skating party at Central Park's Wollman Rink, from 8 to midnight; country-and-Western dancing to music by the Eagle Creek Band and the Five Chinese Brothers, at the 69th Regiment Armory, from 8 to 1; a Motown dance party with the Marvelettes ("Please Mr. Postman") at the Manhattan Center, from 8 to 12:30; and a masquerade ball, with dancing to the George G. Swing Orchestra, at the World Financial Center's Winter Garden, from 8 to 1. For information on venues, other events, and how to purchase a button, call 922-9393. . . . ¶ For the peripatetic, Adventure on a Shoestring offers guided tours through Chinatown, each ending with a dinner at a Chinese restaurant, on Dec. 31 at 4, 6, and 8. For more information, call 265-2663.

READINGS—Perhaps because starting a new year is like starting a new book, or at least another long chapter, this time of year is rife with marathon readings. Beginning on Dec. 30, at 6, a hundred volunteers present Gertrude Stein's "The Making of Americans" in its entirety, planning to finish the evening of New Year's Day. (Paula Cooper Gallery, 534 W. 21st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Jan. 1, beginning at noon: More than two hundred poets, writers, and performance artists, including Penny Arcade, Ava Chin, Maggie Estep, Bob Holman, and John S. Hall, take the stage at Café Nico, for a reading titled "Fahrenheit 451: The Alternative New Year's Day Spoken Word/Performance Extravaganza." (101 Avenue A, between 6th and 7th Sts., 2nd floor. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Jan. 1, beginning at 2: Many of the artists appearing at Café Nico take part in the twenty-fourth annual marathon reading of original poetry and prose at St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie. Among those expected are Jim Carroll, Larry Rivers, Lee Ranaldo, and Taylor Mead. (Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Revolutionary Lines

THE phrase "Ring out the old, ring in the new" carries with it the suggestion of a certain amount of violence, a blithe willingness to sweep aside what has come before, whatever its worth. In such books as LIPSTICK TRACES (Harvard University) and INVISIBLE REPUBLIC (Henry Holt), the cultural critic Greil Marcus has explored the ways in which new works of art and new ways of thinking have been either extensions of, reactions to, or rejections of what preceded them.



One novel that signifies a major breach for Marcus is Joseph Heller's CATCH-22 (Knopf): "It was the first book of any kind that looked back on the great event of a generation, the Second World War, and said, 'This is all bullshit. It was about nothing. We weren't fighting for any cause, and if we were, it was an accident.' It took the black humor that was defining the late fifties and early sixties and turned it against the identity that everybody cherished." Another book on the list is Ralph Ellison's INVISIBLE MAN (Random House), which Marcus describes as "a book of unsurpassed bitterness and terror, a book that said, in its day, 'This is the way it's been, this is the way it's always going to be, nothing can change it, yet it can't go on.' "

Two works that Marcus feels undeniably heralded new epochs are THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE and THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, both of which, although they are "foundations of modernism," are unable to escape a "spirit of regret for an era that's past, of people to whom you can no longer speak, of dead languages that no longer communicate." Marcus finds the spirit of the Declaration in a line that Jefferson wrote (but that was later cut) about the British: "We must endeavor to forget our former love for them." And he points to Marx's "awestruck celebration of the bourgeois world," and to a phrase of his (which the historian Marshall Berman seized upon for the title of one of his own books) that could stand for the arrival of any sweeping new era: "All that is solid melts into air."

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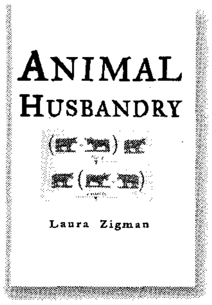

Animal Husbandry
by Laura Zigman
Combining elements of Freud, Darwin, the *Kama Sutra* and *National Geographic, Animal Husbandry* presents a very original perspective on the "battle of the sexes." (The Dial Press)
Pub. Price $22.95
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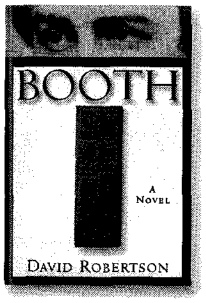
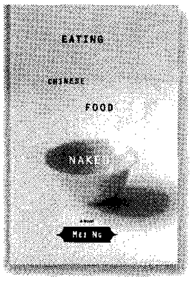
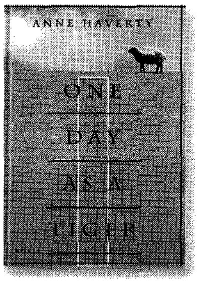


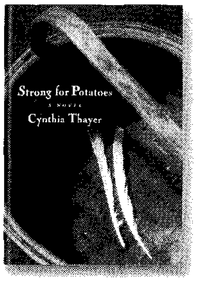
Booth
by David Robertson
This spellbinding novel recalls John Wilkes Booth's assassination of President Lincoln from the perspective of John Surratt, a young man who was lured into the conspiracy. (Anchor Books)
Pub. Price $23.95
B&N Price $21.55



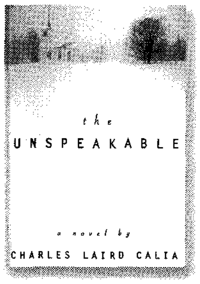
Eating Chinese Food Naked
by Mei Ng
A 22-year-old woman reluctantly returns home to her traditional Chinese-American parents in Queens, where she is forced to confront her conflicting feelings toward her family and heritage. (Scribner)
Pub. Price $21.00
B&N Price $18.90



One Day as a Tiger
by Anne Haverty
In this darkly comic take on traditional Irish country life, two brothers acquire a genetically enhanced sheep—an animal that irrevocably changes their lives. (Ecco)
Pub. Price $22.00
B&N Price $19.80



Strong for Potatoes
by Cynthia Thayer
Blue Willoughby's grandfather, a full-blooded Passamoquoddy, helps her face the difficult challenges in her life and teaches her the lessons that can save her when everything else fails. (St. Martin's Press)
Pub. Price $22.95
B&N Price $20.65



The Unspeakable
by Charles Laird Calia
A moving novel about faith, forgiveness and the bond of friendship between two priests struggling to find the truth that lies hidden in their troubled pasts. (William Morrow)
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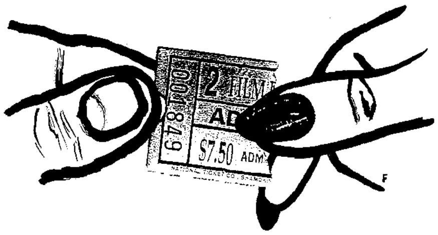

THE MOVIES

OPENINGS

O Amor Natural—A documentary by Heddy Honigmann, about the Brazilian poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade (1902-87) and his continuing popularity among the people of Rio de Janeiro. In Portuguese. Opening Dec. 31. (Film Forum.)

The Boxer—Daniel Day-Lewis stars as an Irish fighter rebuilding his life after serving time in a British prison, in a drama directed by Jim Sheridan, who co-wrote the screenplay with Terry George. Opening Dec. 31.

Oscar and Lucinda—A romantic gambling tale, starring Ralph Fiennes and Cate Blanchett and directed by Gillian Armstrong. Laura Jones's screenplay is based on Peter Carey's 1988 novel. Opening Dec. 31. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Afterglow—In Alan Rudolph's romantic comedy-drama, two couples (Nick Nolte and Julie Christie, Lara Flynn Boyle and Jonny Lee Miller) unknowingly swap spouses. (Angelika Film Center and Regency.)

Alien Resurrection—This fourth film in the series, directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, follows the predictable suspense track: stuck in space, a complacent company of men and women is snacked into submission by one or more slavering bugs. On the menu this time are Brad Dourif, Dan Hedaya, a rather unwell-looking Winona Ryder, and, of course, Sigourney Weaver. The movie repels far more readily than it excites.—*Anthony Lane* (12/1/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

An American Werewolf in Paris—A horror thriller about a travelling student (Tom Everett Scott) and a beautiful girl (Julie Delpy) who, at the full moon, gains a new personality. Directed by Anthony Waller. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 2, Gotham Cinema, and Village Theatre VII.)

Amistad—Steven Spielberg's film about a slave revolt in 1839. (Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Anastasia—Directors Don Bluth and Gary Goldman have simplified and Cinderella-ized the Anastasia story for this opulent cartoon musical: a lost girl must discover the princess inside her. The film doesn't burst through any of the genre's limitations (the Broadway-style numbers still sound old-fashioned), but it's presented at an entertaining clip, and viewers who manage to leave the hype at the door can have some fun.—*Bruce Diones* (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 59th Street East Cinema, and Metro Cinema.)

The Apostle—Robert Duvall wrote, directed, and stars in a film about the transformation of a defrocked minister. (19th Street East 6.)

As Good As It Gets—Jack Nicholson, Helen Hunt, and Greg Kinnear play New Yorkers brought together by a dog, in a comedy co-written (with Mark Andrus) and directed by James L. Brooks. (Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

Bent—Martin Sherman's 1979 drama about gay men during the Holocaust, adapted by the playwright and directed by Sean Mathias. With Clive Owen, Lothaire Bluteau, and Brian Webber. (Angelika Film Center.)

Deconstructing Harry—Woody Allen's latest is an ugly retread of a pet theme: that an artist has no choice but to be a selfish monster. He defiantly casts himself as the loathsome Harry Block, a famous Jewish novelist who ridicules and cheats on women and then appropriates their life stories for his fiction. As a director, Allen seems to be shooting for a new style of ruthless honesty. The film's tone is almost abusively dark: Harry swears and tells crude jokes about blow jobs, and at times you expect him to turn to the camera and flip off the audience. But in the end he seems calculated to win an award for heroic suffering, and Allen seems to be mugging as much as ever for our love. Clear away the pseudoprofound talk about the immorality of genius and you're left with a bunch of celebrity cameos (by Demi Moore, Robin Williams, Elisabeth Shue, Billy Crystal, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Kirstie Alley) and outdated gags—Allen even trots out the one about Death, dressed in rags, knocking on the door.—*Sarah Kerr* (Cinema II, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1941)—Spencer Tracy interprets Dr. Jekyll as a worldly gentleman with a healthy sex drive and Mr. Hyde as his sadistic id. This compelling version of the enduring Robert Louis Stevenson story tackles Victorian hypocrisy head-on, but with appropriately ambiguous conclusions. It co-stars a fetching Lana Turner, as Jekyll's conventional fiancée, and a radiant Ingrid Bergman, as the warm-blooded barmaid who tempts Jekyll and becomes Hyde's kept (and battered) woman. As quick and earthy as he is smart and solid, Tracy achieves the most believable film incarnation of Stevenson's hero-villain; under Victor Fleming's direction, his morphing scenes are spare and persuasive. Best of all, Bergman is both ripe and emotionally eloquent: an irresistible prize for a demon like Hyde, who must possess, then break her. When he advances on this sensual innocent, the horror of the story becomes palpable. John Lee Mahin wrote the script.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 2-3.)

Helen Hunt and Jack Nicholson in "As Good As It Gets."

The Education of Little Tree—In writer-director Richard Friedenberg's film, the grandparents of a young Cherokee boy teach him the ways of their ancestors.

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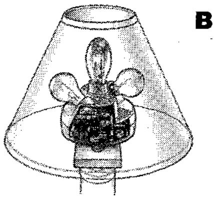

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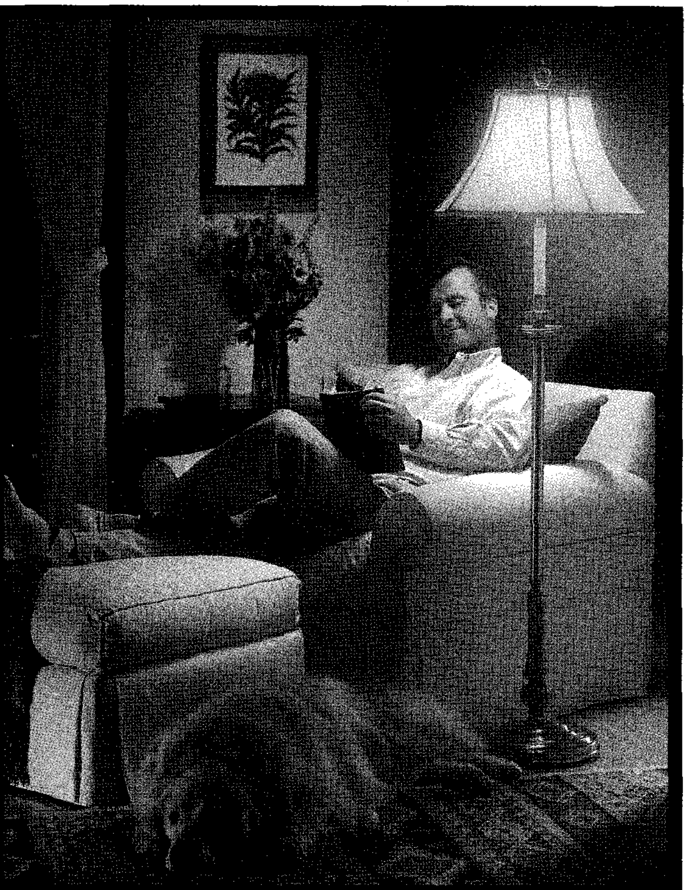

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Eve's Bayou—For her first film, the writer and director Kasi Lemmons attempts to adapt Tennessee Williams's Southern-gothic style to an African-American context. Eve, the heroine (Jurnee Smollett), a ten-year-old bourgeois Creole in late-fifties rural Louisiana, is trying to understand why her mother (an intense, elegant Lynn Whitfield) is so frigid and why her beloved father (a subdued Samuel L. Jackson) is addicted to fooling around. As long as the film sticks to Eve's point of view it's got a naïve charm; unfortunately, Lemmons mixes in Magic Realist fantasies of African voodoo and black-and-white sequences that feel less poetic than arty.—*S.K.* (Quad Cinema.)

Fast, Cheap & Out of Control—Errol Morris has made another unclassifiable documentary. This time around he focusses on a lion tamer, a topiary gardener, a mole-rat expert, and an M.I.T. robotics scientist, interweaving interviews with his eccentric but remarkably unkooky subjects with stock footage, old movies, and cartoons. The result is an alternately comic and haunting meditation.—*Daphne Merkin* (Film Forum 3.)

Flubber—This remake of the 1961 fluff classic "The Absent-Minded Professor" achieves the impossible: the usually hyperactive Robin Williams is overshadowed here by special effects. John Hughes co-wrote the script (with Bill Walsh), packing it with a nasty violence reminiscent of his "Home Alone" series. Directed by Les Mayfield.—*S.K.* (Guild, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

For Richer or Poorer—Tim Allen and Kirstie Alley star in a romantic comedy directed by Bryan Spicer, about a New York couple hiding out from the I.R.S. in Amish country. (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, National Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly.)

The Full Monty—An amiable light comedy, directed by Peter Cattaneo, about six unemployed British steelworkers who mount an all-male strip show for cash. The script, by Simon Beaufoy, is clean and well developed. Each character is given his bit to do, and when the motley crew comes together the actors all work wonderfully with one another, finding a sexy, warm performance rhythm as they gyrate to some classic seventies disco. Two actors—Mark Addy, who plays an overweight, insecure worker, and Robert Carlyle, as the ringleader—are sensational.—*B.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

Gaslight (1944)—Ingrid Bergman is the cherubic bride who is terrorized by the grisly, dirty tricks of her husband, Charles Boyer. This pseudo-Victorian thriller is rather more enjoyable than one might expect, and Bergman is, intermittently, genuinely moving. (Though at times you may suspect that she is feeling rather than acting, her hysteria in the musicale sequence is a good demonstration of how hard it sometimes is to tell the difference.) Boyer is expert, and the cast includes Joseph Cotten, Dame May Whitty, and Angela Lansbury (only in her teens, but you couldn't guess it). The full-dress production is directed by George Cukor.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 2 and Jan. 4.)

Good Will Hunting—A drama written by and starring Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, about a troubled young man with a photographic memory. Directed by Gus Van Sant. Also starring Robin Williams and Minnie Driver. (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin.)

Home Alone 3—Eight-year-old Alex (Alex D. Linz) is home with the chicken pox when a gang of thieves tries to invade his house. Written by John Hughes and directed by Raja Gosnell. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, National Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 64th and 2nd.)

The Ice Storm—Ang Lee's treatment of Rick Moody's novel about suburban anomie is intelligent but curiously remote. Set in New Canaan, Connecticut, in 1973, it focusses on two troubled families, and it benefits from Lee's gently ironic touch: he's less interested in assigning blame for all the misery than in simply documenting the way it spreads and gets absorbed. With Kevin Kline, Joan Allen, Sigourney Weaver, and, among the adolescents, Elijah Wood and Christina Ricci.—*D.M.* (9/29/97) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Jackal—An international thriller directed by Michael Caton-Jones and loosely based on the 1973 classic "The Day of the Jackal." Bruce Willis is the villainous master of disguises out to assassinate an important political figure, Richard Gere an imprisoned I.R.A. terrorist brought in to track him down. Though Gere is game, Willis barely registers: his character is humorless, and so is this dryly competent film.—*B.D.* (Criterion Center, 59th Street East Cinema, and Metro Cinema.)

Jackie Brown—Pam Grier stars as a double-dealing smuggler, in Quentin Tarantino's adaptation of the Elmore Leonard novel "Rum Punch." (Embassy 3, Murray Hill Cionemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

John Grisham's The Rainmaker—Matt Damon is a young, earnest lawyer up against a manipulative insurance company in Francis Ford Coppola's entertaining adaptation of Grisham's formulaic best-seller. What differentiates the movie from previous Grisham-based films is the energy and warmth Coppola packs into the standard plot. He coaxes playfully arch performances from some substantial character actors (Danny DeVito, Jon Voight, Mary Kay Place, Dean Stockwell) and slows his directing to a leisurely pace, allowing his actors, rather than his showmanship, to carry the scenes.—*B.D.* (Art Greenwich Twin, East 85th Street, and 19th Street East 6.)

The Kid (1921)—The most enchantingly Victorian of Chaplin's features, and perhaps because of the way his sentimentality (which was often awkward, and even mawkish, later) fits the subject, this film seems remarkably innocent and pure. Edna Purviance is the destitute young mother who abandons her infant; Charlie, the tramp, takes the child to his garret, and five years later the child (Jackie Coogan) smashes windows, which Charlie, now a glazier and wearing glass on his back like angel wings, repairs. The story is about the love between these two street waifs and about Charlie's fight to keep the child out of the hands of the authorities. A little girl named Lita Grey (known as Lolita), later to be Chaplin's wife, appears in a dream sequence set in Heaven. Silent.—*P.K.* (Film Forum 2; Jan. 4-5.)

Kundun—Martin Scorsese's chronicle of the early years of Tenzin Gyatso, the current Dalai Lama. (Lincoln Square.)

L.A. Confidential—Curtis Hanson's new thriller, set in Los Angeles in the early fifties, is about a group of cops who between them cover the full moral range, from the uptight integrity of Ed Exley (Guy Pearce) to the four-star sadism of Bud White (Russell Crowe). The plot, adapted from the James Ellroy novel, is both murky and tangled, yet the movie never bogs down. Hanson paces the tale with ease, decorating it with one neat performance after another: James Cromwell as the smiling police chief, David Strathairn as an oily pimp, Kim Basinger as one of his prize charges, and, better still, Kevin Spacey as a "celebrity crime-stopper" who gets dragged into the dark and dirty.—*A.L.* (9/22/97) (Lincoln Square and New York Twin.)

Ma Vie en Rose—The story of a little boy (Georges du Fresne) convinced he is a little girl. Directed by Alain Berliner. In French. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil—Clint Eastwood brings a crisp directorial touch to John Berendt's baroque best-seller about murder in Savannah. Kevin Spacey plays an antique dealer who kills his much younger lover (Jude Law); John Cusack plays a New York writer, with a mouth that hangs open in a state of constant surprise. A black transvestite, the Lady Chablis (played by the real Lady Chablis), eats up the screen whenever she appears.—*D.M.* (12/8/97) (Lincoln Square and 72nd Street East.)

Mr. Magoo—Leslie Nielsen brings the myopic old gentleman to life, in Stanley Tong's film. (84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 4, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

MouseHunt—A comedy about brothers (Nathan Lane and Lee Evans) who inherit an old house and its troublesome rodent. Directed by Gore Verbinski. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 64th and 2nd, and Waverly.)

Office Killer—The début film by the still photographer Cindy Sherman is as cool as the self-portraits she's famous for. Carol Kane plays Dorine, a homely, mistreated copy editor at a magazine that's modernizing its editorial process. When she's demoted to part-time work at home, she starts killing off her bosses: a virago editor (Barbara Sukowa), a bratty writer (David Thornton), a nice girl who turned ambitious and joined management (Jeanne Tripplehorn). Downsizing is a great premise for a horror movie, and Kane gives a strong, witty, revolting performance. Yet the film is neither as original nor as much fun as you want it to be. The only time Sherman really responds to the material is in the scenes showing what Dorine does to the corpses: they're exquisitely gross—and hard to take. Molly Ringwald does a spirited turn as a slutty magazine employee.—*S.K.* (Quad Cinema.)

The Postman—Kevin Costner directed and stars in this vision of a post-apocalyptic America. (Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

The Proud Ones (1953)—The China Coast of Sartre's "L'Amour Redempteur" has become Veracruz in Yves Allégret's film, but the milieu is still the depths: heat, squalor, disease, and desperation, exotic but unbearable. A bored French

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton I and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly I and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

woman (Michèle Morgan) searches for a doctor to take care of her dying husband (André Toffel); she finds a drunken derelict (Gérard Philipe) who refuses to treat him. Through founding a plague hospital, the woman and the doctor redeem themselves and, incidentally, find love. Allégret uses this story atmospherically in an effort to approximate the ironies, inconsequences, accidents, and stupidities of life, and the atmosphere *almost* redeems the movie. In French.—*P.K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Dec. 31.)

Scream 2—Director Wes Craven and screenwriter Kevin Williamson bring their "Scream" characters back for a reunion. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Shall We Dance?—A middle-aged Japanese businessman (Koji Yakusho) sees a young woman standing at a high window; in an act of admirable folly, he tracks her down and finds that she is a dance teacher. He therefore learns to dance—initially in order to be near her, and then, more surprisingly, because he starts to enjoy himself. Masayuki Suo has written and directed a comedy that exerts a cool and slightly mysterious charm. In Japanese.—*A.L.* (62nd and Broadway.)

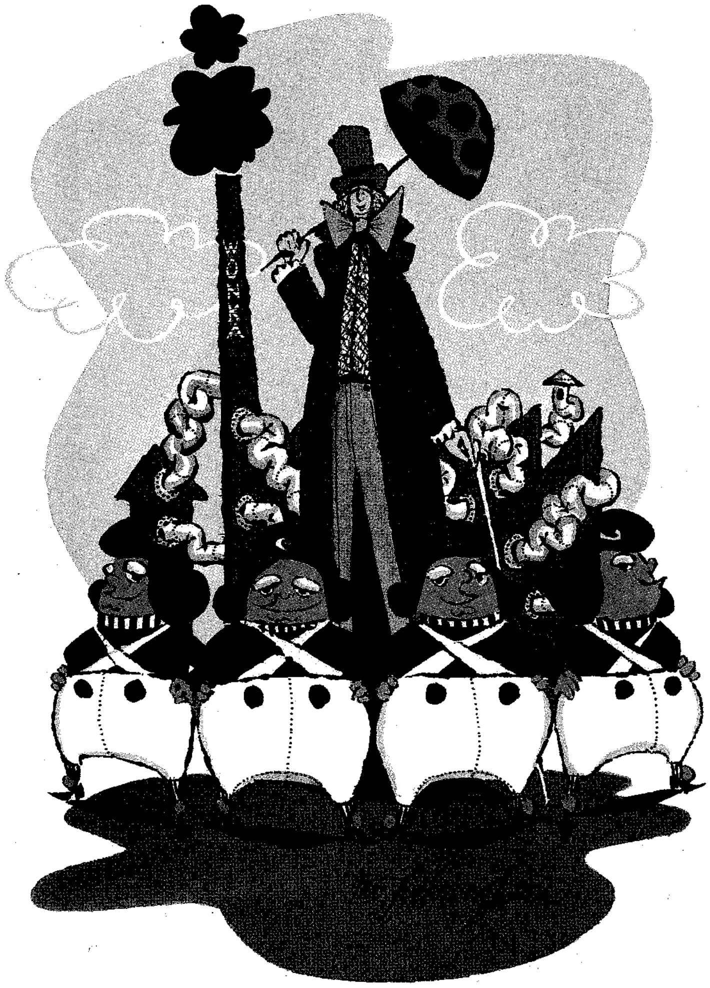
Starship Troopers—A futuristic, overproduced version of the fifties flicks in which giant insects wage war on mankind. There's some extraordinary computer bug work by the special-effects master Phil Tippett ("Jurassic Park"), but Paul Verhoeven has directed with a bludgeon and cast the movie with actor-models whose soap-opera dialogue suggests "Melrose Place Goes to War."—*B.D.* (Criterion Center.)

The Sweet Hereafter—An exquisitely sober movie by Atom Egoyan, based on the novel by Russell Banks. Ian Holm holds the screen with volcanic force as a big-city lawyer trying to bring a class-action suit on behalf of a small blue-collar town in the wake of a school-bus accident. The cast is uniformly good, and Sarah Polley, as a paralyzed survivor of the crash, is extraordinary.—*D.M.* (11/24/97) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Titanic—At well over three hours, James Cameron's grand new picture has plenty of romance to get through before it breaks the vessel in half. Leonardo DiCaprio plays the freewheeling Jack, who wins a steerage ticket and finds himself falling for the wealthy Rose (Kate Winslet), to the disapproval of her mother (Frances Fisher). The social animus of the story, like its imaginative majesty, is Dickensian: Cameron presumes that first-class passengers are either imprisoned souls, like Rose, or brutes, like her fiancé, Cal (Billy Zane). The movie delivers old-fashioned morality wrapped in the latest technology; far from foundering, however, it functions beautifully, and the eventual devastation drowns you with gusto and pathos. This all feels like two hundred million dollars well spent. With Kathy Bates, Bill Paxton, Gloria Stuart, and the estimable Victor Garber as the ship's builder.—*A.L.* (12/15/97) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Tomorrow Never Dies—A media mogul (Jonathan Pryce) is the villain in the newest James Bond film, starring Pierce Brosnan as 007. Directed by Roger Spottiswoode. (Chelsea West, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Wag the Dog—A comedy in which a Washington spin doctor (Robert De Niro) and a movie producer (Dustin Hoffman) set out to con the nation. Directed by Barry Levinson, from a screenplay by Hilary Henkin and David Mamet. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Cinema I and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Village Theatre VII; starting Jan. 2.)



At the Walter Reade, "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory."

The Wings of the Dove—The director Iain Softley's adaptation of Henry James's magisterial late novel starts out as a jazzy, confident effort. But it gets a bit sluggish with the entrance of Milly Theale (Alison Elliott), the rich, good-hearted American orphan whom the penniless Kate Croy (Helena Bonham Carter) persuades her lover, Merton Densher (Linus Roache), to seduce in order to secure their future together. Elliott doesn't have the depth to convey Milly's galvanizing goodness, and this deficiency threatens to undo the film, despite its glorious costumes and all that golden Venice light.—*D.M.* (11/10/97) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

The Winter Guest—Alan Rickman directed this drama about a mother and daughter, played by Emma Thompson and her real mother, Phyllida Law. (Paris.)

ALSO PLAYING

AIR FORCE ONE (reviewed in our issue of 7/28/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BEAN** (11/24/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **FAIRY TALE: A TRUE STORY:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MEN IN BLACK** (7/7/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **RED CORNER:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **SOUL FOOD:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **TELLING LIES IN AMERICA:** Worldwide Cinemas.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—A program of Charlie Chaplin films. Dec. 31: Two groups of shorts. . . . Jan. 1-3: "The Gold Rush" (1925; with narration) and "The Great Dictator" (1940). . . . Jan. 4-5: "The Kid" (†) and "The Chaplin Review," three short films. . . . Jan. 6: "Unknown Chaplin" (1983, Kevin Brownlow and David Gill).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films starring Ingrid Bergman. Jan. 1 at 2: "The Bells of St. Mary's" (1945, Leo McCarey). . . . Jan. 1 and Jan. 3 at 5: "June Night" (1940, Per Lindberg; in Swedish). . . . Jan. 2 at 2:30 and Jan. 4 at 5: "Anastasia" (1956, Anatole Litvak). . . . Jan. 2 at 6 and Jan. 4 at 2: "Gaslight" (†). . . . Jan. 2 at 8:15 and Jan. 3 at 2: "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (†). . . . Jan. 5 at 2:30 and Jan. 6 at 6: "Dollar" (1938, Gustaf Molander; in Swedish). . . . Jan. 5 at 6 and Jan. 7 at 2:30: "Only One Night" (1939, Molander; in Swedish). . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 2:30: Films made by the Biograph Company, 1905-11. . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 5: "Shadows" (1980, John Cassavetes). . . . ¶ A program of Italian films; in Italian, with English subtitles. Jan. 2 at 3 and Jan. 3 at 5: "The Sound of Trumpets" (1961, Ermanno Olmi). . . . Jan. 2 at 7: "Don Giovanni" (1979, Joseph Losey). . . . Jan. 3 at 2:30 and Jan. 6 at 6: "Doctor Beware" (1941, Vittorio De Sica). . . . Jan. 4 at 2:30 and Jan. 5 at 6: "The Family" (1987, Ettore Scola).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films by French directors; most in French, with English subtitles. Dec. 31 at 2 and 6:15: "The Story of Adèle H." (1975, François Truffaut). . . . Dec. 31 at 4 and 8:15: "The Proud Ones" (†). . . . Jan. 1 at 2, 5, and 8: "The Wages of Fear" (1953, Henri-Georges Clouzot). . . . Jan. 2 at 2 and 6:30 and Jan. 3 at 4:10 and 8:30: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (1993, Tran Anh Hung). . . . Jan. 2 at 4:10 and 8:30 and Jan. 3 at 6:15: "India Song" (1975, Marguerite Duras). . . . Jan. 4 at 4:30 and 7: "L'Atlantide" (1921, Jacques Feyder; silent). . . . Jan. 5 at 2 and 6 and Jan. 6 at 3:45: "Le Grand Jeu" (1934, Feyder). . . . Jan. 5 at 4:15 and 8:15 and Jan. 6 at 2: "Two Men in Manhattan" (1956, Jean-Pierre Melville). . . . ¶ Jan. 3-4 at 2: "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" (1971, Mel Stuart).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Jan. 3 at 2: "Nanook of the North" (1922, Robert Flaherty). . . . Jan. 3 at 4: "Moana: A Romance of the Golden Age" (1925, Flaherty). . . . Jan. 4 at 2: "Tabu" (1931, F. W. Murnau). . . . Jan. 4 at 4: "White Shadows in the South Seas" (1929, Flaherty and W. S. Van Dyke).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Jan. 4 and Jan. 7 at noon and Jan. 8 at 2: "Ready to Wear" (1994, Robert Altman). . . . Jan. 4 and Jan. 7 at 3:30 and Jan. 8 at 5:30: "Unzipped" (1995, Douglas Keane).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Jan. 4 at 7, the feature will be "Rain" (1932, Lewis Milestone).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—Through Jan. 1: Kung-fu films from Hong Kong. . . . From Jan. 2: "The Leopard" (1963, Luchino Visconti; in Italian).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Jan. 6 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "When the Cat's Away" (1996, Cédric Klapisch; in French).

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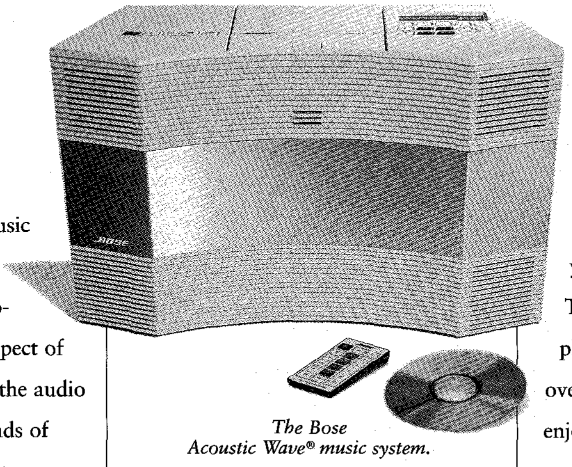

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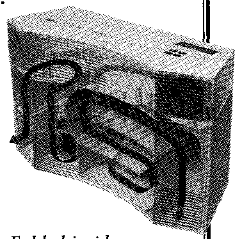

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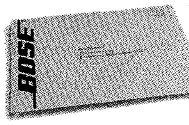

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE PICTURES

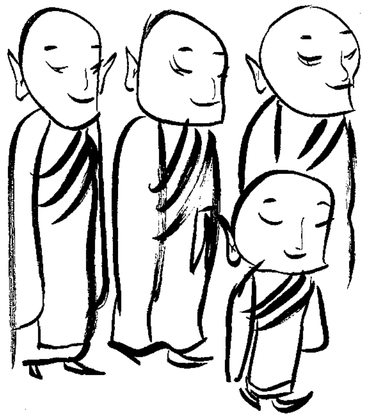
The Dalai Lama is a hit in Hollywood, but what about his family?

WHEN it comes to casting, Martin Scorsese likes his movies to be ethnically correct. This was easy enough in the case of, say, "GoodFellas": there's no shortage of Italian-American actors fully equipped to play Italian-American mobsters. (Admittedly, Robert De Niro did play a Jewish mobster in "Casino"; De Niro can play whomever he wants.) But Scorsese's new movie, "Kundun," about the Dalai Lama, presented his casting team with a challenge. "I think at some point we had the idea that there might be Tibetan actors," Barbara De Fina, Scorsese's longtime producer, explained the other day. "But then it turned out that there weren't any Tibetan actors."

There were, however, a number of non-Thespian Tibetans who were especially qualified to play members of the Dalai Lama's family, since they were, in fact, members of the Dalai Lama's family. In the movie, the Dalai Lama's mother is played by his niece, a former restaurateur from southern India; one of the Dalai Lama's brothers is played by a nephew, who is a student in Chicago; the eighteen-year-old Dalai Lama is played by the Dalai Lama's great-nephew; and the brother of the Dalai Lama's sister-in-law plays the Dalai Lama's regent. "We didn't go into this thinking, Wouldn't it be great to have a lot of the Dalai Lama's relatives in the movie," said Ellen Lewis, Scorsese's casting director, who trawled Tibetan communities all over India and the United States for likely candidates. "I don't know how to explain it. Karma?"

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM BACHTELL

Although "Kundun," which is grave, magisterial, and exquisitely shot, is too good to be just another Tibet movie, the filmgoing public might be justified in feeling that, what with Brad Pitt and Richard Gere, this particular beleaguered cinematographic nation is getting overexposed. Hollywood's infatuation with things Tibetan is easy to poke fun at, given how much it appears to be a kind of compensation for the movie business's value system. Last fall's "Seven Years in Tibet" tried to suggest, in a weirdly self-referential scene, that the infatuation is mutual: we see a teen-age Dalai Lama watching a newsreel in his private screening room, and wondering aloud whether future audiences will see the conquest of Tibet on film. But the "Kundun" cast, apart from one actor who enrolled in film school afterward (the Chicago student), seemed unseduced by the lures of Hollywood. "The Tibetans would pray and chant in the evening, and if there was a special day they might light a hundred candles or something," De Fina said, though she noted that one group of monks was thrilled to be staying in a motel with a swimming pool.

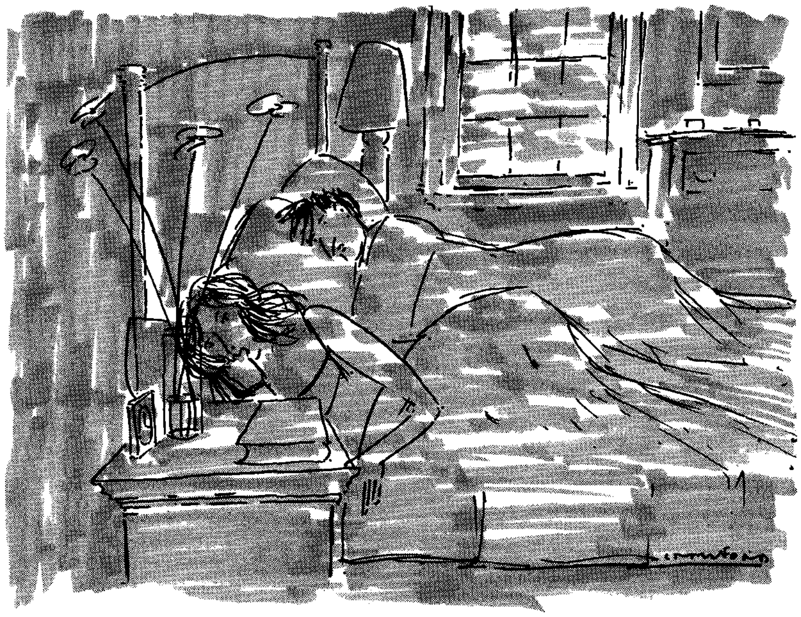


Shooting with Tibetans presented some unfamiliar production problems. The cast had to be able to perform in English (hence, perhaps, the preponderance of highly educated Dalai Lama relatives). And, since Tibetan refugees don't have passports, the production had to hire someone to sit in an Indian immigration-office waiting room for months on end, pushing along permits that would allow the cast to travel to the set, in Morocco. But a Tibetan cast also meant that some typical production problems—like dealing with prima-donna behavior—did not arise. "The set was much quieter and calmer than usual," De Fina said. "Marty loved that when he got there in the morning, instead of people running around and yelling 'Hi!' everybody would come over and sort of bow." —REBECCA MEAD

ONCE A REBEL DEPT.

A fellow-traveller of the Rolling Stones puts her stamp on Miami.

ON a recent Wednesday evening, the designer Barbara Hulanicki was standing quietly inside her most recent creation, the lobby of the Marlin Hotel, in Miami's South Beach, while a smoking sea of rock and roll roiled around her. When the Marlin opened, six years ago—the first of five South Beach hotels owned by Chris Blackwell, the founder of Island Records—Hulanicki was hired to create a rock-and-roll ambience, and that, in turn, helped spark the South Beach revival. This year, Blackwell decided to redesign the Marlin—less hard rock, more techno. His inspiration came in part from Island's recording artists U2, who recorded some of their latest album, "Pop," in the Marlin. But Blackwell also wanted to preserve the Carib-



"Which Microsoft millionaire are you thinking about now?"

bean feeling that is the brand element in all his hotel ventures. So he commissioned Hulanicki, a master eclecticist, to effect this latest transformation of music into style. She calls her solution Techo Deco. There are lots of brushed-aluminum surfaces (right down to the Kleenex boxes and the toothbrush holders) and riveted aluminum backsplashes; the floors in the rooms are bare and the beds and coffee tables are on wheels. But even these hospitalesque details seem to undulate slightly, with the smoothness of reggae; and each room's media center (which includes your own E-mail address and WebTV) is implanted in what looks like a clay oven.

Hulanicki, a pale, blond woman who was wearing purple-tinted glasses, said it was amazing how in thirty years rock had migrated from being about the music to being about image and style. Although Hulanicki was among the first to bring rock and roll together with fashion and design, in the sixties—her clothing shop, Biba, which opened in 1964, became a center of Swinging London—in those days she did not use rock music as inspiration. Her ideas for Biba came from thirties movies, Art Nouveau, and her own fashion drawings, which often showed a very thin, starved-looking waif in a head scarf—an image perhaps derived from her own childhood, when she and her family fled from Poland to Palestine, where her diplomat father was assassinated, in 1948. Her chiffon dresses, boas, spangly tops, skinny sleeves, and plum lipsticks were soon picked up by Twiggy, and then by Chrissie Shrimpton, who was Mick Jagger's girlfriend at the time, and the rock-as-style revolution was under way. Biba begat Fiorucci, which begat the Hard Rock Café, which begat the Marlin.

"Rock and roll in the sixties was not this huge business," Hulanicki said. She waved at Blackwell, who was standing by the door in shorts and sandals, his hair tousled, looking as if he were just off the sailboat from Jamaica, not a private plane. "It was a small thing that was about music. Now it's all this." She gestured at some of the other guests, who reflected the continued progress of rock into the worlds of fashion, sports, and entertainment. There was a mogul (Barry Diller), a movie star (Antonio Sabato, Jr.), a supermodel (Naomi Campbell), a boxer (Lennox Lewis), a venerable rock star (Mick Jagger), and a new one (Marilyn Manson). "That's why it's so good to see Mick going strong," Hulanicki went on. "He comes from the more genuine rock and roll—the music."

Jagger stood not far from her, in a T-shirt, tolerating a young woman in a leather skirt and a small tube top who was making a great show of Choose Me enthusiasm for him. "The amazing thing is, Mick doesn't seem to mind it," Hulanicki said. She remembered some caricatures that the London Sunday *Times* did in the sixties, when the Biba scene was at its height. "They were supposed to show what we would look like at fifty. Of course, the whole idea of us being fifty was so ridiculous. But here we all are, past fifty and exactly the same, except that everybody gets older." —JOHN SEABROOK

INK

In San Francisco, everyone's still reading Herb Caen.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL evidence strongly suggests that Herb Caen, the Addison and Steele of San Francisco (with a shot of Pepys on the side), no longer dwells among the living: more than three thousand people attended a memorial service for him last February; his daily newspaper column, which from 1938 to 1996 usually ran six days a week, has stopped appearing in the San Francisco *Chronicle;* and consumption of vodka Martinis in Northern California has marginally declined. Nevertheless, Herb sightings have proliferated recently.

"The World of Herb Caen," a book of photographs and gleanings from his sixteen thousand-plus columns, rose to the top of the *Chronicle's* best-seller list. During its rapid ascent, it paused briefly at the No. 2 position, and Mayor Willie Brown declared, "I'll find out who's No. 1 and break his legs." Caen's literary-romantic aspiration was to become inseparably identified with San Francisco, in the same way that, say, Mississippi belonged to Faulkner or Joyce inhabited Dublin, and the San Francisco he had in mind was a genial place where anybody who wasn't a bore could qualify as a pal. Seventy-five thousand admirers showed up one June day in 1996, a couple of months after he turned eighty—the high point of an up-and-down spring during which he was awarded a Pulitzer Prize, got married for the fourth time, and revealed to readers that he was afflicted with inoperable lung cancer—to celebrate an officially proclaimed Herb Caen Day and the christening of Herb Caen Way, a three-and-a-quarter-mile promenade along the Embarcadero. Walter Cronkite, an eyewitness, marvelled at "all these thousands of people turning out to cheer a newspaperman."

Barnaby Conrad, a writer, painter, and erstwhile night-club owner, who, with the help of Caen's longtime assistant, Carole Vernier, edited "The World of Herb Caen," can't resist boasting in the book's introduction that Caen referred to him in print as his "oldest and best friend." Perched in the balcony of Moose's Restaurant, in North Beach, where Caen was a regular, is one of Conrad's masterworks, a life-size portrait of Herb, circa 1993—a cutout on Masonite—that shows him seated, legs crossed, writing in a small notebook. He wears a brown jacket, beige trousers, a white shirt, a burgundy necktie, and a bemused expression. A hundred cardboard copies of the painting have been distributed to Bay Area booksellers. The Herb-in-residence at A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books, on Van Ness, is situated in a window surrounded by books and a diorama of the San Francisco skyline. According to Roger Pantano, an assistant manager, passersby seem gratified by the tableau. "They stop and say, 'Hey, there's Herb Caen. He's looking pretty happy.' Then they come inside and buy a book."

When Barnaby Conrad did the original painting, he deliberately departed from verisimilitude. "I gave Herb that little notepad, though in fact you almost never saw him take notes," he said the other day. "Why did I depict him that way? Just to show he was a writer."

Tom Brokaw, who not long ago delivered one of the Herb Caen/San Francisco *Chronicle* Lectures at Berkeley, told me, "One of the things about the press that I've always loved is that it has more than its share of rascals and rogues. I always thought of Herb Caen as the personification of the people I wanted to hang out with. He never stopped working. You could be his friend, but if he got an item on you it went into the column. People would tell him, 'Herb, please, it's my marriage.' And he'd say, 'Hey, I've got a column to do.' Whenever I'm going to San Francisco, I want to have a great little story ready for Herb. I know he's not there, but I can still hear him saying, 'You got anything for me? What have you got?' "

—MARK SINGER

WE'LL DRINK TO THAT

One fishy reason to toast the New Year in the Hamptons.

THE beginning of the Montauk cod-fishing season has more to do with ocean temperature than with wine consumption. But the fact that it coincides, more or less, with New Year's Eve is fortunate, since Captain Rich Etzel needs about thirteen hundred champagne corks to catch cod. In the coming days, Captain Etzel and a crew will head offshore in Breakaway, the Captain's forty-two-foot Down Easter, and lay ten miles of line along the ocean floor, where cod feed. Every twenty to twenty-five feet along the line, a three-foot-long leader is attached, at the end of which is a cork and a hook baited with clams.

"The cork floats the bait one to two feet off the bottom," Etzel explained as he squinted into the December sun rising over Montauk Harbor. "It keeps it away from crabs." The inadequacy of, say, a Sancerre cork has nothing to do with cod's preference for the Pinot Noir grapes of champagne, or even with a need to keep up appearances off the Hamptons' shores. "You're fishing in a hundred and fifty feet of water—regular cork is shrivelled up by the pressure," he says. But champagne corks, built to withstand the pressure of bottle fermentation, can handle the depth.

So the word that cork equals cod has been spread among family and friends in the small wintertime community, and Etzel expects that on New Year's Day hundreds of champagne corks will find their way down to the docks, onto the Breakaway, and a hundred and fifty feet below the surface, just out of reach of the crabs.

—JACK OTTER

DEPT. OF DUBIOUS POLLS

THE NARCISSUS SURVEY

A fearless inquiry into whatever.

BY HENDRIK HERTZBERG

MOST public-opinion polls are motivated by sensible, practical goals—electing some rich fool to the Senate, marketing a useless or hazardous product, gathering ammunition for a one-sided propaganda blitz. *The New Yorker*, as far as I know, has no such goals. But we went out and commissioned a poll anyway, simply to gratify a rather diffuse curiosity about how various sorts of Americans look at their lives, at society, and at God. We thought there might be some instructive contrasts between the attitudes of regular people and those of what marketers and demagogues call élites. Hold up a mirror—that was the idea. Hence the Narcissus Survey.

The Narcissus Survey was conducted by Penn, Schoen & Berland, a firm whose client list includes the President of the United States. The questions, written in consultation with editors at *The New Yorker*, were put to three groups of Americans. One group was the broad masses: not the whole teeming two hundred and sixty-eight million, of course, but a reasonable facsimile—four hundred randomly selected warm bodies eighteen years old or older and roughly representative of the adult population by income, region, race, and age. The other groups were two samples of the privileged: six hundred members of the economic élite, defined as college graduates aged between thirty and sixty whose personal (not family) income is more than a hundred thousand dollars a year; and four hundred members of the cultural élite, defined (and what better way to define that much maligned cadre of charming, attractive, and intelligent citizens?) as subscribers to *The New Yorker*. For convenience, we'll call the three groups, respectively, Main Street, Easy Street, and—in honor of their I.Q.s, their presumed Anglophilia, their indulgent attitudes toward soft drugs, and, of course, their taste in reading matter—High Street.

Some of our findings come under the

heading of beating the obvious over the head with a stick. In a variety of predictable ways, the classes are more satisfied than the masses. The élites are happier with their careers and feel more optimistic about the future. At all levels, people believe they are working harder than their parents did to achieve the same standard of living, and predict that their children will eventually feel the same way. And so on.

We went for the obvious stuff, of course, if only to anchor our survey in the existing literature of polling. But we also tried to formulate offbeat questions—questions designed to refract opinion through unconventional prisms, to get at underlying feelings indirectly, and to induce people to let down their guard a bit. Some surprises ensued.

OMIGOD

CONSIDER, for example, religion. One of the staples of survey-research lore is that Americans are an extraordinarily religious people. In the United States, the question "Do you believe in God?" routinely turns up "yes" majorities in the nineties, which is substantially higher than the "yes" response to similar questions in European countries. True to form, 92 per cent of our Main Street respondents answered "yes" to the God question, and only 3 per cent said "no." Close to 90 per cent of Easy Street said "yes," too. And more than 70 per cent of both groups answered "yes" to the question "Do you consider yourself a religious person?"

High Street was another story: its *New Yorker*-reading inhabitants are split fifty-fifty between religious and nonreligious people. And "only" 61 per cent say they believe in God, while 21 per cent say they don't. (One can be fairly certain, by the way, that all those "yes"es are unequivocal, because the Narcissus Survey offered two other choices beyond "yes" and "no"; to wit, "Yes, if God is defined in a certain way" and "I'm agnostic." These mugwump alternatives pulled only a point or two each on Main and Easy Streets, and a combined total of 13 per cent on High Street.)

How one interprets numbers like these is likely to be heavily influenced by the ideological proclivities one brings to the exercise. For example, here's one way to spin the belief-in-God findings: despite all the talk about a cultural élite out of touch with Middle America, the Narcissus Survey shows that an *overwhelming majority* of that so-called élite affirms its faith in God. Here's another: despite the cultural élite's desperate efforts to ingratiate itself with the mainstream, the Narcissus Survey shows that a member of that élite is fully *seven times* as likely to be an atheist as is an average, real American.

In an attempt to dig a bit beneath the spiritual surface, the Narcissus Survey offered respondents three choices and asked them to say which of them most closely corresponded to their ideas about God.

	Main	*Easy*	*High*
A supreme being who sometimes intervenes in human affairs	47	41	24
The force that created the universe and its laws, but does not intervene in the working of that creation	22	27	22
The name people give to the sacred spirit within each person	20	21	38
Don't know/not sure	11	10	16

No doubt, some readers will be surprised at how many people embrace the notion of an intervening, "personal" God, while others will be surprised at how many do not. It's safe to say, though, that the two great streams of religious feeling that were present at the republic's creation—theism, which is the belief in the prayer-answering God of history and of daily life (a belief shared by nearly all the formal denominations), and deism, which is the belief in a more or less impersonal, noninterfering, abstract spirit or Creator (a belief shared by many people both churched and unchurched, and by many of the country's founders)—still flow strongly.

Indeed, the replies to a related pair of questions hint at a deep division just beneath the surface of the country's broad religious consensus. When the three groups were asked "Do you believe that your religion is 'true' in a way that other religions and spiritual traditions are not?," Main Street said "yes" nearly twice as often as Easy Street and more than three times as often as High Street. Those who answered "yes" were then asked, "Would you describe other religions as being false?" Nearly half the Main Streeters said "yes" again, as against only a third of the Easy Streeters and none—zero per cent—of the High Streeters. Main Street, it appears, is either more serious or less tolerant about religion than are the élites.

MONEY MONEY MONEY

THE Narcissus Survey also asked a series of questions about wealth and income in American society—questions aimed at getting people to specify what they think constitutes being "rich," "upper class," "upper middle class," "working class," and "poor," and then getting them to estimate how much of the population falls into those categories. The goal was to form an idea of what sort of America exists in people's imaginations, and then to see how closely it resembles the real thing.

The survey shows that Americans greatly overestimate the number of people at both ends of the economy. Main Street thinks that a third of the population lives in poverty, while both Easy Street and High Street think the number is closer to a quarter. However, according to the Census Bureau, the real figure is only around 14 per cent. Perceptions of wealth are equally skewed. Both Main Street and High Street think, on average, that if you have a personal net worth of around $2 million you're rich, and that some 10 per cent of American households fall into that category. Easy Street thinks that it takes around $3 million, and that 6 per cent of the country's households are rich by that definition. But according to S.R.I. Consulting, a subsidiary of S.R.I. International (formerly known as the Stanford Research Institute), only 1.2 per cent of American households are worth more than $2 million (never mind individuals, and never mind those worth more than $3 million).

Similarly, Main Street guesses that a household income of $105,000 a year makes a family upper middle class, that $206,000 makes it upper class, and that fully a quarter of American households fall into each of these categories. High Street thinks it takes $135,000 to make a family upper middle class and $338,000 to elevate it to upper class, and puts 21 per cent and 15 percent of American households into these respective categories. Easy Street has a more modest idea of upper middle class

($113,000), but thinks, on average, that $348,000 equals upper class, and assigns "only" 18 and 10 per cent of American families to each category. Actually, S.R.I. reports that some 6.5 per cent of Americans have a household income of over $100,000, and 1 per cent over $200,000. What this suggests is that the American Dream is, in large measure, a daydream.

SEX, DRUGS, AND ROCK 'N' ROLL

HERE'S where the readers of this magazine part company dramatically with their fellow-citizens, especially in terms of attitudes. On questions of sexual experience, the gray columns of numbers assembled by the Narcissus Survey can be interpreted to show (for example) that High Street people have sex a little less often (though with more partners) than the others. But the data are "noisy"—too many variables jostling each other, clamoring for causal credit. The differences are small, and, anyhow, the same data could as validly, or invalidly, be interpreted to mean (for example) that married people, on average, have sex a little more often (though with rather fewer partners) than unmarried people.

Some of the more out-of-left-field questions, however, yielded meaningful clues to fundamental differences in how our three groups think about sex. For instance, "How many sexual partners does a person have to have in a year before you would consider that person promiscuous?" Of those who responded, a solid majority of Main and Easy Streeters said four or fewer—triple the percentage that said nine or more. On High Street, though, the answer "nine or more" was just as popular as "four or fewer." (High Street, by the way, was noticeably more likely than either of the other groups simply to decline to answer the sex questions. As a group, it seems, *New Yorker* readers display both libertinism and delicacy—a gratifyingly aristocratic combination.)

Another question: "If you had life to live over again, would you have many more, somewhat more, somewhat fewer, or many fewer sexual partners?" On this point, interestingly, the masses are more contrite than the classes: of those who answered (around two-thirds of each group), two out of three Main Streeters apparently wish they had slept around less, while a bare majority on Easy Street and a clear majority on High Street wish they had slept around more. And High Streeters are far more tolerant of adultery: half say it is acceptable under certain circumstances, while 84 per cent of Main Street and 74 per cent of Easy Street say it is always morally wrong.

In all three groups, around 80 per cent of married respondents say that they're very satisfied with their marriages. But Main Street is notably pessimistic about the future of the traditional family as an institution: 60 per cent think that in twenty years' time most children will grow up in single-parent households. By an identical margin, Easy Street thinks two-parent households are the future. High Street is more evenly divided, with a slight plurality on the pessimistic side.

It turns out, not very surprisingly, that High Streeters are exceptionally tolerant of homosexuality (and are far more likely to have close friends who are gay). The Narcissus Survey asked people to choose among a set of five responses they might give a child who announced that he or she was homosexual. Among High Street respondents, 78 per cent opted for the most positive choice—"totally accepting and supportive." Only 36 and 44 per cent, respectively, of Main Street and Easy Street did the same. Some 28 per cent of Main Street and 27 per cent of Easy Street picked "very upset and concerned but would try to conceal these feelings," and another 28 per cent of Main Street and 25 per cent of Easy Street picked "upset and concerned and would communicate this to the child." On High Street, these responses were chosen by only 14 and 6 per cent, respectively.

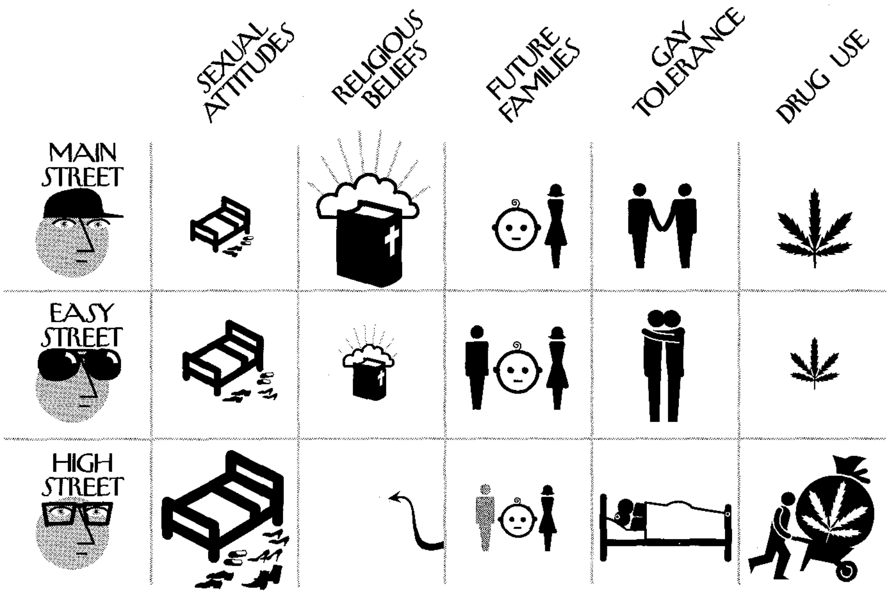


CHART BY NIGEL HOLMES

A related question loaded the dice rather heavily:

> Which would you prefer for your son or daughter: to be heterosexual, childless, and either unmarried or somewhat unhappily married; or to be homosexual, involved in a stable, happy relationship, and have children?

	Main	*Easy*	*High*
Heterosexual, childless	56	44	28
Homosexual, involved	21	27	49
Don't care	23	29	23

For an awful lot of people on Main Street and Easy Street, it seems, even happiness and grandchildren would not be enough to make up for a son's or daughter's homosexuality.

A somewhat similar pattern emerges from the Narcissus Survey's findings about recreational drugs. Nearly half of the general public, 41 per cent of the economic élite, and just over two-thirds of *New Yorker* readers say they have tried marijuana—bigger numbers, by the way, than other surveys have shown. (The usual finding is that a third say they have smoked pot.) There is broad support for permitting doctors to prescribe the drug for the relief of suffering: 76 per cent of Main Street, 86 per cent of Easy Street, and a remarkable 94 per cent of High Street support medical use. But there's a difference of opinion on marijuana decriminalization: 59 per cent of High Street is for it, a view shared by barely a third in either of the other groups.

Sorry, no questions about rock 'n' roll. Maybe next year. ♦

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

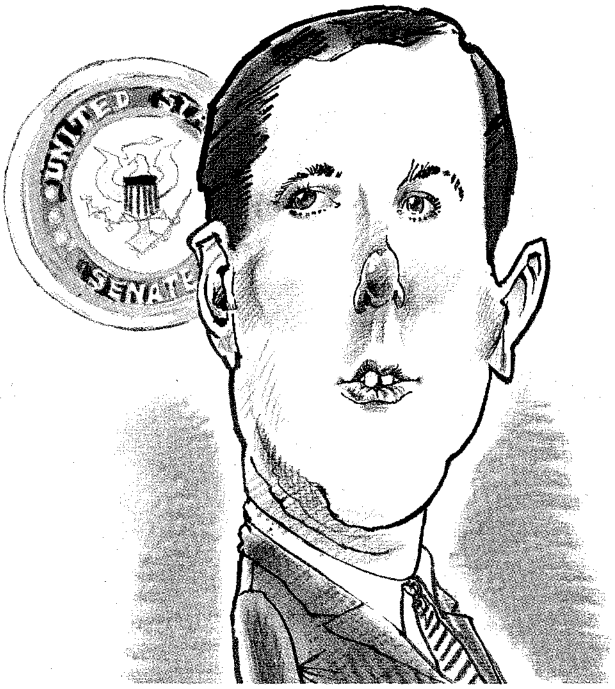
THE SENATOR'S DILEMMA

For Rick Santorum, the partial-birth-abortion issue unexpectedly got personal.

BY JOE KLEIN

On the evening of September 26, 1996, Karen Santorum was home with her three young children watching C-SPAN as her husband, Rick, who is a United States senator from Pennsylvania, debated an issue that has emerged as one of the most volatile social questions of the decade: the effort to outlaw partial-birth abortion, an extremely rare but highly controversial procedure that is used to end mid-to-late-term pregnancies. Since 1995, Congress has twice voted overwhelmingly to ban the operation, which doctors call intact dilation and extraction (or intact D&X), and President Clinton has twice vetoed the bill. During that time, the partial-birth question has led to a dramatic and unexpected reframing of the debate over legalized abortion—a debate that seemed destined to wane in intensity after the Supreme Court made it clear, in its 1992 Planned Parenthood v. Casey decision, that it had no intention of overturning the fundamental right to abortion established nineteen years earlier, in Roe v. Wade.

The Court, though, had left open a small area of contention: states could pass laws to regulate abortion—they could impose waiting periods, or demand mandatory counselling—as long as these laws didn't place an "undue burden" on the women seeking the operation. This seemed to promise a marginalized, technical debate—until, in the mid-nineties, antiabortion activists discovered, and seized upon, the existence of the partial-birth procedure. Though D&X is used infrequently, it is one of several ways—none of them pleasant—to end mid-to-late-term pregnancies: the fetus is maneuvered into a breech position and partly delivered; then, according to the American Medical Association, the doctor performs a "partial evacuation of the intracranial contents" while the fetal head remains inside the womb, in order "to effect vaginal delivery of a dead but otherwise intact fetus." In other words, in order to make the delivery possible the skull is punctured and its contents are suctioned out.



Soon after Santorum became the leader of pro-life forces in the Senate, complications with his wife's pregnancy brought home the abortion issue.

DAVID SMALL

The decision made by abortion opponents to concentrate their lobbying efforts on the prohibition of one specific, rare, and morally questionable procedure was an unusual tactical choice—incrementalism, instead of total war—but it was quite appropriate to the Clinton era of sophisticated, small-bore message marketing. "It's been a clever strategy on their part," Joanne Blum, a legislative expert who serves as a vice-president of the National Abortion Rights Action League, said. "They haven't been interested in making the compromises necessary to get an actual piece of legislation passed. They want to undermine Roe v. Wade."

The strategy has paid off. Pro-choice activists have clearly been placed on the defensive. Indeed, there is some evidence, according to recent polls, that the partial-birth question has caused the public to grow more cautious in its support of abortion in general. Even politicians who favored abortion rights in the past have decided to oppose this form of it. "It is too close to infanticide," Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a usually reliable pro-choice voter, has said.

In the fall of 1996, after the President vetoed the first partial-birth-abortion ban passed by Congress, Rick Santorum became—somewhat to his own surprise—the leader of the anti-partial-birth forces in the Senate. It was a role that placed him at the center of what soon became a very emotional, and personal, maelstrom. On the evening of September 26th, as a vote to override the President's veto approached, the floor debate became particularly intense. In one of the exchanges, as Karen Santorum watched at home, Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, of Illinois, stared at Rick Santorum and said, "No member of the Senate can face the trauma that is represented by the issue of late-term abortion. . . . The men of this Senate cannot be pregnant, and I daresay for the women of the Senate pregnancy is a hypothetical matter of nostalgia."

At that point, Karen Santorum began to cry. She was eighteen weeks pregnant at the time, and the possibility of a late-term crisis was not "hypothetical" in her case. In three previous pregnancies, she had felt life by nineteen weeks, but this baby hadn't yet quickened. She had once been a neonatal-intensive-care nurse, and some of the heartbreaking things she'd seen flashed through her mind. "I was so angry at Moseley-Braun," she later recalled. "What if there was something wrong with my baby? How horrible that would be."

The moment passed. The vote to override the President's veto fell just short of the two-thirds majority needed. Karen forgot her twinge of fear: she had never had a problem with her other pregnancies; she had already heard this baby's heartbeat; and she was optimistic by nature. But the Santorums would soon endure an experience that few politicians have to face: they would be forced to test their ideological beliefs against the imprecise information and split-second decisions of a real-life crisis. A week later, when Karen and Rick went to a Washington-area radiologist for a routine five-month sonogram, Karen knew there was trouble as soon as she saw the image of her womb on the screen.

A dark ring was visible around the fetus. Their baby was suffering from a minuscule but almost invariably fatal problem. A tiny posterior urethral valve wasn't working properly, the baby's bladder wasn't emptying, and so there was no amniotic fluid (which is composed primarily of fetal urine). Without fluid, fetal movement and, eventually, growth in the womb become more difficult, and the development of the kidneys and the lungs is seriously impaired.

Santorum called Scott Adzick, whom he had met a few months earlier during an official visit to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Adzick is a pediatric surgeon who is known for his ability to perform prenatal operations in which birth defects can be repaired and life-threatening tumors removed. "I called him from the hallway at the clinic," the Senator recalled.

Adzick offered some hope: there was a procedure that might work if the kidneys were still functioning. A plastic shunt could be inserted into the baby's bladder and used to channel the fetal urine into the womb; the post-urethral valve itself could easily be repaired after the baby was born.

The Santorums drove to Philadelphia the next morning. The first test results were not encouraging: the baby's kidneys didn't seem to be functioning properly. "The medical team took us into a consultation room, and a doctor gave us the options," Santorum recalled. "He said, 'I know this one is probably not for you, but you can terminate the pregnancy.' The other two options were to let the baby die or to try a bladder tap, testing the urine in the bladder to see if there was any kidney function at all. He said it looked pretty grim, but there was always a chance."

Doctors tried two bladder taps. The procedure was similar to amniocentesis but far more delicate: a long needle was inserted through Karen's abdomen into the baby's bladder, and urine was extracted. The doctors said they would phone with the results of the tests, and the Santorums drove to their home in Northern Virginia. On the way, they decided to name the baby Gabriel Michael—after the two archangels—and they prayed for his health. That evening, they attended Mass at St. Catherine's Church, in Great Falls, Virginia. "And the most amazing thing happened," Karen said. "The baby kicked for the first time. We later learned that the second tap had left a little hole in the bladder, which was allowing some urine to seep into the womb, and that gave Gabriel the room to kick."

The Senator said, "I was sitting in church and thinking that it was just a week after the vote to override the President's veto on partial birth, which was the first time I'd ever really taken an active role in this issue. I mean, it was like, What's God doing here?"

RICK SANTORUM is the youngest member of the Senate. He is thirty-nine years old, and has the look of a very mischievous altar boy. In 1994, after spending four years in the House of Representatives as an enthusiastic supporter of Newt Gingrich's Republican revolution, he was elected to the Senate, narrowly defeating the Democratic incumbent, Harris Wofford. Santorum was not a popular member of the Senate; his colleagues thought him callow and intemperate. "He was like a new golden-retriever puppy," his friend Senator Dan Coats, of Indiana, says. "There was incredible passion and energy, which some in the Senate saw as inappropriate." (A less politic assessment comes from a Senate Republican staff member: "I was once in a meeting where Santorum was just ranting about welfare reform. I thought he was a jerk, but I think he's learned a lot since then.")

Santorum was quite conservative, but more of a low-tax libertarian than a traditional-values sort. He had always tried to stay away from the abortion issue—which was difficult, given his wife's family. Karen's father, Kenneth L. Garver, was a pediatric geneticist, who was vehemently antiabortion. (The Garvers had twelve children, eight of whom

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were associated with the medical profession, including two doctors, two dentists, and three nurses.) "I hadn't really thought much about the issue," Santorum said during one of several conversations I had with him and Karen. "My first job was serving as an aide to a pro-choice member of the Pennsylvania State Senate, and I guess I thought of myself as being pro-choice, too. But when I decided to run for Congress Karen's father asked me what position I was going to take on abortion, and my reaction was 'Can't I just kind of skate by on this thing?' But he made me listen to his arguments. We had several long discussions about it, and I wrestled with it. I tried out several positions, like 'I'm personally against, but the law says abortion is legal.' None of them felt right, except to just say I was pro-life, and let it go at that."

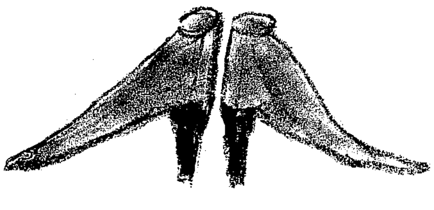
When Karen became pregnant for the first time, in 1990, Santorum accompanied her to the five-week sonogram and saw the baby's heart beating; at twelve weeks, he saw the baby—his daughter Elizabeth—sucking her thumb, and he began to feel more strongly that he'd come to the right conclusion on the issue. Still, he avoided floor debates on abortion. "I didn't get involved, because it was politically risky to be an activist, on either side," he told me. "My feeling was, the public would respect your position, pro-choice or pro-life, as long as you didn't make much noise about it. That's the way most people up here feel."

Then, one day in the spring of 1996, he was sitting in his office watching C-SPAN as Senator Bob Smith, of New Hampshire, described partial-birth abortion—a procedure that Santorum hadn't previously known about—and Senator Barbara Boxer, of California, "ripped into Bob," Santorum recalled. "It just outraged me. I can understand how you could be pro-choice, but to vehemently defend something so ghoulish and horrible as partial birth was incomprehensible. I ran over to the Senate and made my first floor speech ever on abortion, supporting Bob Smith."

Some of Santorum's political advisers were horrified. "You don't want to be known as the partial-birth-abortion senator," he was told. The issue seemed more clear-cut than many other questions relating to abortion, but it was still extremely emotional, and was studded with complications and exceptions. Furthermore, Santorum's own position on abortion was not absolute—he made exceptions in cases of rape and incest, and also when the life of the mother was at stake. When I asked him if the exceptions he had made for rape and incest would hold into the middle trimester of a pregnancy, he said, "Oh, jeez, I don't know.... I've always said you had to deal with it within a few weeks.... By nineteen weeks, I'd have to say no."

Many of the most vexing questions were unanswerable. Twenty-five years ago this month, Roe v. Wade gave states the right to outlaw abortion after the point of "viability"—that is, the moment the baby could survive independently outside the womb—and forty states and the District of Columbia had restricted post-viability abortions. (In mid-December, the New Jersey Senate voted to override Governor Christine Todd Whitman's veto of a ban on the intact-dilation-and-extraction procedure.) But, with advances in medical technology, viability comes much earlier now than it did twenty-five years ago. "It's probably sooner today than it was yesterday—the technology is changing that fast," I was told by John C. Nelson, a trustee of the American Medical Association from Salt Lake City, who helped formulate the organization's position on late-term abortions. Viability had been approximately thirty-two weeks when Roe v. Wade was decided, in 1973. "Now it's down to twenty-five weeks in some cases," Nelson said. "I've seen nine- or ten-ounce babies born who survive and do quite well."

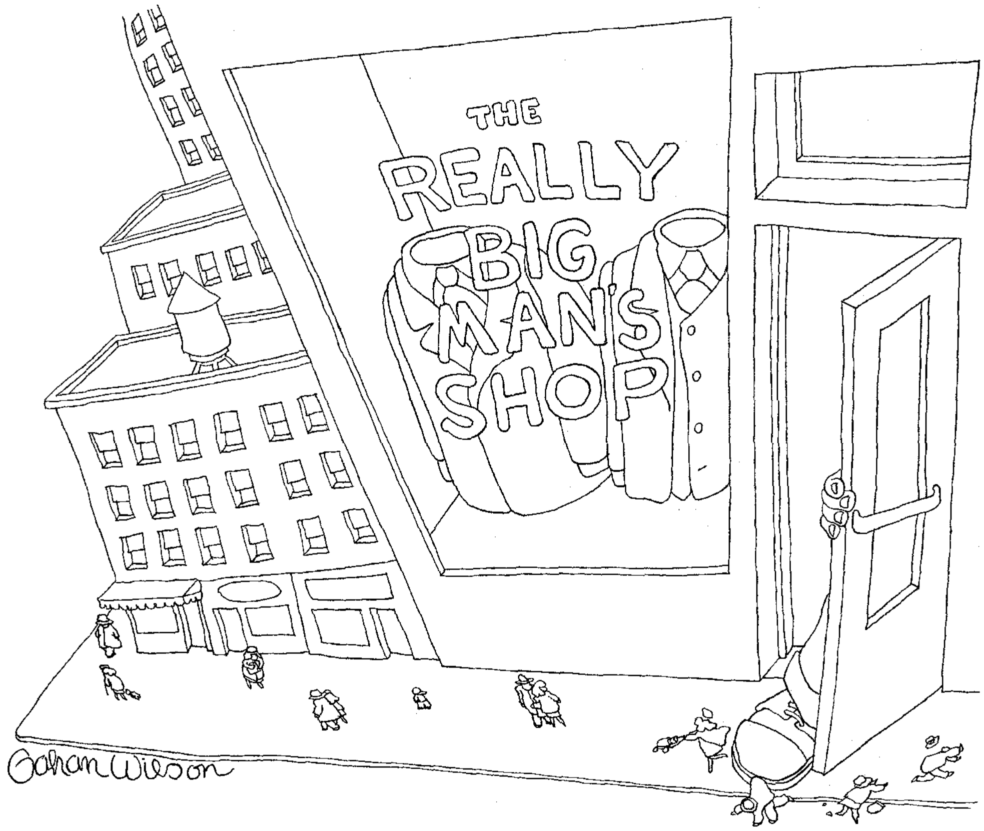
A generation of young parents like the Santorums had seen the undeniable evidence of human life far earlier than the point of viability—in sonograms performed at five, twelve, and twenty weeks. According to Linda DiVall, a Republican pollster, the public's position on abortion has become more nuanced in recent years: a clear majority supports first-trimester abortion, but a clear majority also believes that there should be restrictions—especially on mid-to-late-term procedures. "This is where the squishy, middle-of-the-road pro-choicers peel off—especially Catholic boomer women," DiVall said. "They've seen the sonograms. They don't think abortions should be allowed so late. They think it's murder."



In the summer of 1996, when Bob Smith, who was facing a tough reëlection campaign, said that he could no longer carry the burden of being the lead senator in the partial-birth-abortion fight, Santorum agreed to take it on. There were several striking moments in the debate that fall—Karen's recollection of Carol Moseley-Braun's remarks was among them—but perhaps the most memorable event occurred during Santorum's concluding remarks. "It was one of the most moving things I've ever seen happen on the floor," Dan Coats recalled. "Rick was saying, 'It's not just *some cells, it's not just some tissue*—it's a baby!' And at that moment, up in the gallery, a baby began to wail, and the sound seemed to fill every cubic inch of the Senate."

A WEEK later, the Santorums' personal crisis began. After the initial bad news, there was a brief moment of hope: the second round of tests showed that the baby's kidneys were performing just well enough to make an operation possible. Rick and Karen returned to Philadelphia and, in a remarkable bit of outpatient microsurgery, a shunt was successfully inserted into Gabriel's bladder. The doctors had two caveats, though. There was a possibility that the shunt would fall out and the operation would have to be performed again. There was also a slight chance—one in two hundred—of infection: if Karen began to experience cramps or a fever in the next forty-eight hours, she should call a doctor immediately.

That was on Tuesday, October 8th. The next day, the Santorums went to Pittsburgh for Karen's parents' fiftieth wedding anniversary. "Wednesday night was a bad one," Karen said. "I didn't feel right. I didn't sleep well. And Thursday morning I wasn't feeling well at all. I took my temperature and was running a slight fever—one hundred degrees. I took it again, and it was up to one hundred point five. I felt cramping, too, but I was in denial—I didn't want to believe the operation had caused an infection. It was



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a one-in-two-hundred chance, they'd said. I decided to try another thermometer. My fever was up to one hundred and one."

There was no alternative now but to call the doctors in Philadelphia. They recommended that she head immediately for the labor-and-delivery unit at Magee Women's Hospital, in Pittsburgh. Karen's temperature was still rising; the cramps had become contractions. "They came in to do a sonogram, and it was the worst thing that could have happened," Karen said. "The baby was perfectly normal; I could see him kicking and moving around. The shunt was working perfectly. He finally had the perfect little environment—and it was just awful, because I was in labor and I knew that if he was born then he wouldn't survive."

Karen became adamant: she wanted the doctors to find a way to stop the labor. Her fever was still rising—it peaked at a hundred and five. She was shivering, even though she had been covered with several blankets; she was becoming delirious. The doctors said that Karen was probably suffering from an intrauterine infection and that there was the possibility of septic shock if they made any effort to stop the labor. "They said that if the infection wasn't treated there was a real chance it would kill Karen," the Senator recalled. "But Karen was really insistent. She kept saying 'No, no.' "

"In a situation like that, you are completely lost in the storm," Karen said. "Now I can see that I was caught up in the grief and the anguish. But I had three other children at home. It was wrong to even think about risking my life."

The Santorums, and especially the Senator, have difficulty talking about what they would have done if Karen hadn't gone into labor—if her life had been threatened. "There are cases where, for the life of the mother, you have to end a pregnancy early," Santorum said, steering away from the particular. "But that does not necessarily mean having an abortion. You can induce labor, using a drug like pitocin. After twenty weeks, the doctors say, abortion is twice as risky as childbirth. If there's a real emergency, you can do a cesarean section. But in no case is it necessary to kill the baby and then deliver it."

Santorum's view is supported—although not completely—by John Nelson, of the American Medical Association. He told me that in the "vast majority" of such cases induced labor is the safest and most humane course to take. But the "vast majority" does not include all cases. Abortion-rights activists argue that sometimes induced labor takes days, and that there may be occasions when an abortion, perhaps even the intact D&X procedure, is preferable in order to ease the suffering—if not to save the life—of the mother.

The Santorums had brushed very close to the heart of the late-term-abortion question, but they had been spared some of the toughest decisions. Gabriel had had a maddeningly tiny birth defect, but some mothers discover multiple, cataclysmic problems in their twenty-week sonograms. And some have had to face the horrifying prospect of carrying to term a baby who will not survive, or, at best, will be severely debilitated. Pro-choice lobbying groups had brought forth women who had decided, with genuine regret, to terminate their pregnancies using this controversial operation. The President surrounded himself with five such women when he chose to veto the partial-birth-abortion ban that April. "The Santorums had every right to make the choices they did," Kate Michelman, president of the National Abortion Rights Action League, says. "What we believe is that every mother in those circumstances should have the right to make her own choice, even if it is different from the one that the Santorums made."

There does, however, seem to be a growing uneasiness about late-term abortion as an elective procedure, a sense that perhaps it is time to impose stricter standards on most late-second-trimester operations. But what about the exceptional cases? Does a mother have the right to destroy an imperfect child? Who would find it easy to tell a woman that she has to carry a baby with severe, perhaps fatal, defects to term? Faced with this extremely difficult question, the Santorums are unflinching. It was a question that Rick had spent many hours discussing with Karen's father, who felt strongly—and had written a paper for the *American Journal of Human Genetics* arguing—that such decisions were a form of eugenics, an effort to tinker with the species which could lead to a virulent perfectionism, a Darwinian forced march in which the less than perfect would be brutally weeded out. "It's what the Nazis were about," Karen told me. A life, she believed—and Rick had come to believe—was a life, and no one, not even a mother, had the right to decide whether a child, however severely compromised, should live or die.

At twenty weeks, a human fetus usually weighs less than half a pound; its eyes are sealed shut; its head is disproportionately large. But it has all its fingers and toes, and its genitals, and it looks just like a baby. For Rick and Karen Santorum, the birth of Gabriel Michael confirmed their beliefs about partial-birth abortion; the idea that the state might condone violence against this tiny but undeniably human creature seemed impossibly barbaric. For Karen Santorum, the delivery was an incredibly painful experience. "I'll never forget those contractions," she said. "They were far worse than my other pregnancies. I think it was probably because I knew that I was going to go through this process, I was going to give birth and I would not hear the baby cry."

Shortly after midnight on Friday, October 11, 1996—just a week after the Santorums were told about their child's fatal defect—the baby was born, and he did not cry. He lived for two hours. His father baptized him with a few drops of water that had been blessed by a priest. Both parents held the child in their arms, and took pictures of him. When he died, Karen found that she couldn't part with him. "They wanted to take him to the morgue," she said. "I remembered taking babies to the morgue as a nurse, and I just didn't want him there with all these other dead babies. So we kept him with us all night and buried him the next day."

The Santorums had one other difficult decision to make. They decided that their other children should get to see and hold the tiny infant. "We were afraid they might have horrible thoughts about what he looked like," the Senator said. "We wanted them to see that he was a beautiful tiny little baby. Now my daughter Elizabeth will show people pictures of Gabriel and tell them, 'This is my baby brother. He's an angel.' "

The partial-birth-abortion congressional debate in 1997 was, if anything, uglier and more contentious than the debate of the previous year, although the apparent drift of public sentiment and of several important pro-choice politicians—and a clearer understanding of some of the facts—appeared to bolster the abortion opponents' case. In February, an abortion-rights lobbyist named Ron Fitzsimmons admitted that he had lied about the number of intact dilation and extractions that had been performed each year: he had cited four hundred and fifty, but those had been performed in the final trimester; many thousands—the exact number is unknown—were performed in the second trimester. Investigations by the Washington *Post* and the Bergen County (New Jersey) *Record* concluded that most of these mid-term abortions were elective, and had little to do with the physical health of the mother. In May of 1997, after several years of avoiding the issue, the American Medical Association said, in an extremely rare public-policy statement, that intact D&X was never "the only appropriate procedure"—although the group insisted that the decision as to whether it was "absolutely necessary" should be left to the presiding physician.

In response to these developments, the Senate Minority Leader, Tom Daschle, a Catholic, who was horrified by the partial-birth procedure, introduced a compromise proposal, a federal law that would have banned all post-viability abortions, with a carefully written exception made in cases of "grievous injury" to the health of the mother. But Santorum refused to negotiate, on two grounds: first, the Daschle bill would not have covered intact D&Xs performed in the second trimester; also, he didn't think the "grievous injury" language was tight enough. "It could mean anything," Santorum told me, overstating the case a bit. "It's unenforceable. It would perpetuate the system we have now—abortion on demand until birth—because no court is going to convict a doctor who says that he was making a decision based on the health of the mother. It's never happened, and it never will."

Eventually, Daschle chose to vote with Santorum against partial-birth abortions. The measure received sixty-four votes

"O.K.! See you Monday at eight, seven central."

A PIECE OF THE STORM

From the shadow of domes in the city of domes,
A snowflake, a blizzard of one, weightless, entered your room
And made its way to the arm of the chair where you, looking up
From your book, saw it the moment it landed. That's all
There was to it. No more than a solemn waking
To brevity, to the lifting and falling away of attention, swiftly,
A time between times, a flowerless funeral. No more than that
Except for the feeling that this piece of the storm,
Which turned into nothing before your eyes, would come back,
That someone years hence, sitting as you are now, might say,
"It's time. The air is ready. The sky has an opening."

—Mark Strand

in the Senate, three short of the number needed to override a veto. "On balance, we were voting to eliminate what I consider to be a very grotesque procedure," Daschle told me. "And, from a strategy point of view, I thought this would accelerate the decision-making process by the courts."

Some abortion-rights activists were anxious to get the partial-birth issue off the table before further damage could be done to their cause. Linda DiVall, the Republican pollster, said that the percentage of people who described themselves as "pro-choice" as opposed to "pro-life" had declined from 53–35 (pro-choice over pro-life) to 45–45 in little more than a year, a shift that she attributed to the partial-birth controversy. "Our polls don't show that," said Kate Michelman, of the National Abortion Rights Action League. "I'm not in the business of public relations," she added. "Sometimes we have to take positions that enable reporters to label me and us as extreme... but this debate is a political strategy designed to overturn Roe v. Wade, to weaken the constitutional protections for a woman's right to an abortion, to put women at risk, and to put doctors under political supervision. I've never defended this particular procedure. I just believe that this is not an arena for political interference."

As for Rick Santorum, the death of his son and his growing involvement in the abortion controversy had caused him to grow both softer and harder. Friends and staff members said he'd become more sober, and more devout. "He's mellowed," said Karen, who also has become more deeply religious. But Santorum's feelings about abortion now seem every bit as vehement as Kate Michelman's. His bill allowed doctors to take any measures necessary to save the life of the mother. But his insistence that there could be no other health exceptions made even his allies at the American Medical Association a bit uneasy. John Nelson said, "You can't get the ink dry on a protocol"—a prescribed method for handling a medical situation—"before you find yourself in the operating room faced with a circumstance you haven't thought of." The American Medical Association helped to modify the specific language of Santorum's bill and reluctantly supported it as the least objectionable alternative; the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists opposed it. Nelson also said, "We just can't have a situation where a patient isn't allowed to receive the care she needs because of some law. The way the Santorum wording came out, we believed, you could prevent a doctor from going to jail for performing a partial-birth abortion, but we certainly didn't lobby very hard in favor of it."

Bill Clinton vetoed the partial-birth-abortion ban for the second time on October 10, 1997—which, Karen Santorum noted, was a day away from the first anniversary of Gabriel's death. Another attempt to override the veto will be made soon after Congress reconvenes in February. ♦

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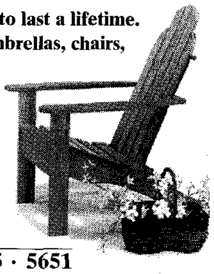
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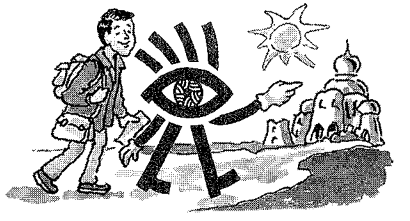
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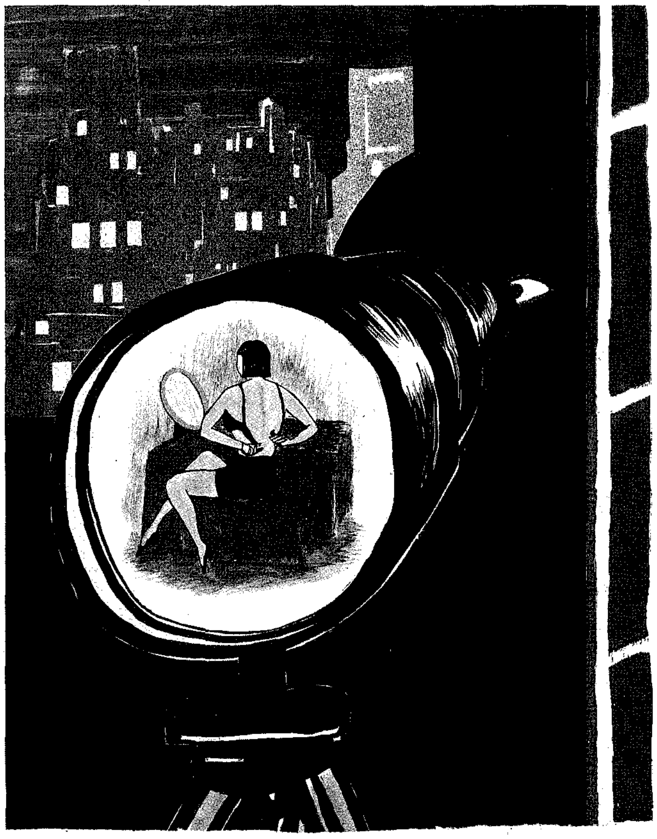
THY NEIGHBOR'S LIFE

Why do so few New Yorkers close their curtains?

BY BILL BUFORD

IT'S nighttime in New York, a clear, cold East Coast night. It's freezing outside—but it's warm in here, the windows closed. Not much sound. The city—its traffic, its taxis, its sirens—is reduced to a distant, undistinguished murmur, like a surf or a wind, a piece of weather, a noise that's there but not there. I've turned off the lights in my kitchen and I'm inching my way out of the shadow cast by my refrigerator. Slowly, slowly—I'm meant to be invisible in the dark—I reach the kitchen window. Outside, there's a courtyard of sorts, surrounded by three buildings. By New York standards, they are not tall. Directly across is the back of One Lexington Avenue, the posh building on the courtyard (just last month, a friend spotted Winona Ryder washing dishes); that's about twelve floors high. Directly behind it is a more ordinary dwelling—small rooms for a man or a woman living alone; cheap, bright furniture; lots of television. From my kitchen window, the lights out, I can take in fifteen, maybe twenty apartments.



More than a hundred telescopes are sold every week in New York—a city that hasn't seen a star since the great blackout of 1977.

FILIP PAGOWSKI

I feel like Jimmy Stewart in "Rear Window." A woman on her own, wound up tightly in a terry-cloth bathrobe, prepares for bed—a narrow, single bed, immaculate, with a white sheet neatly folded over the top of wool blankets and everything tucked in snugly. She walks into the bathroom to clean her teeth and returns with a hot-water bottle. She closes the curtains. It's not yet nine o'clock. Five floors above is the apartment of a lad whose slow seduction of a visitor a few nights ago provided me with a voyeuristic late movie when, on a lonely Saturday night, I found myself pacing around my apartment and spotted him slowly removing the clothes of a young woman, article by article—her shoulder exposed, then her other shoulder, her long back—until they both dropped down and disappeared below the window ledge. Last night it was the gay man—I know he's gay from the regular fiesta of frisky friends—standing there stark naked for the longest time, everything unapologetically on hairy display. My favorite viewing is of my closest courtyard neighbor: on most nights, there's a slim, dark-haired woman sitting at a round table, waiting for her partner—a tall blond man wearing an apron—to serve her. He prepares dishes and sauces, his head in a cookbook, or enveloped by steam as he silently pours steel pots of something hot into the sink. I don't know why I find them so interesting, because I can pick up only the smallest details of their lives: a shopping list pasted to the refrigerator door, a message pad by the wall telephone, the fact that, when her partner is away, the slim, dark-haired woman eats pasta by herself and reads the *New York Review of Books*.

It is a universal courtesy that you don't openly spy on your neighbors. The key word is "openly." After all, what is more familiar than the image of the village busybody: the heavy curtain pulled back, just so, so you can't quite see the cantankerous crank hiding behind it but you know she's there, and she knows you know she's there, and you know that she wants to believe that she's finally caught you doing something naughty—she's suspected it for ages. But the essential feature is this: the nosy crank knows who you are.

In New York, no one knows who you are.

Anonymity is a feature of most cities, but New York is different in two regards: first, the sheer vertical vertigo of the place (there are so many people stacked on top of each other that it's impossible not to be tempted, every now and then, by the occasional, lights-out little peek); and, second, that the little peek is not bad manners. It's not bad manners to look into a dwelling where the curtains have been left open; it's bad manners to close them. I became aware of the practice when I was first looking for a place to live. I don't know how many apartments I saw before I realized that that telescope in the corner was not an ordinary useless piece of furniture, like a piano nobody plays or an aquarium without fish. Instead, it was a calculated instrument of invasion: it was resting horizontally, pointed not at the sky but bluntly into the bedroom across the street.

Consider this extraordinary statistic: more than a hundred telescopes are bought each week in New York. That's five thousand telescopes a year. To see what? Most people haven't seen a star since the great blackout in 1977. (In fact, the only places that sell more telescopes are in California, but that's understandable—California has a sky.) You can buy a high-powered telescope—reflecting, refracting, computer controlled—in one of the city's many specialty optics shops. I dropped in on one such shop last month. "Most of my customers," the man who runs the place told me, "are not going home to count the moons around Uranus." Most are in the market for something powerful enough to see across Central Park or the East River—across, that is, what the man referred to as the "comfort distance," the distance between your apartment and someone else's that is high enough or removed enough that its inhabitants enjoy the illusion of privacy: since they can see no one, they believe no one can see them.

Wrong.

Last month, I visited one of the shop's customers on the Upper West Side, the happy owner of a Celestron C5, a five-inch mirror-reflecting telescope capable of magnifying an image up to three hundred times, complete with an electronic motor for precision tracking. ("Your Celestron C5," the instruction manual reads, "is not limited to astronomical viewing alone. It can also be used for terrestrial viewing to study the world around you.") That morning the terrestrial viewing was pretty tame. Madonna, who owns an apartment across the way, wouldn't be appearing on the roof for sunbathing, an activity that, to my high-powered friend's disappointment, was taken up last summer by no one under the drooping age of seventy. But peering through his Celestron C5 from thirty-six floors up (with a special eyepiece, I was able to double its magnifying power) I could see across Central Park, about half a mile away, and into the grand buildings of Fifth Avenue. I spent an hour there, a soundless invasion into the private lives of people huddling by their windows unaware that they had become silent entertainment for someone across the Park: a couple having an argument (all gestures); a forlorn woman looking out at the Avenue below her; an elderly gent doing aerobic exercises in his Y-front underpants; a man in a white shirt and a deep-blue tie leaving a woman's apartment reluctantly—he kissed her, then made for the door, opened it halfway, closed it, and kissed the woman again. He repeated the routine six times before finally departing.

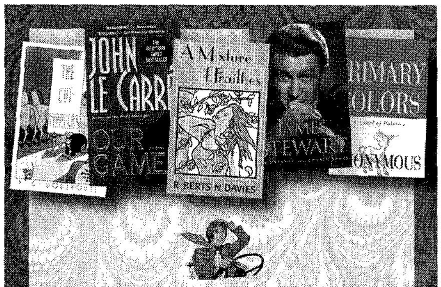
In New York, no one knows who you are. And the experience is utterly exhilarating. An example of the city's inhumanity? Possibly. But it might also be an expression of its insatiable humanity, an appetite for more and more about the human species, the visual equivalent of gossip.

IT would be disingenuous of me not to admit to an inadvertent discovery. Last spring, I told a Dutch friend where I lived, and he said that he knew the spot: he'd been right near there, for dinner, in a building across the courtyard. "Yes," he said, "that's where Susanna Porter lives." Susanna Porter is a mutual friend, and a very likable person who works in publishing. She is dark-haired and slim.

"Is her husband," I asked my Dutch friend, "tall and blond, by any chance?" I didn't say anything about the apron.

I finally met up with Susanna Porter at a reading given by Julian Barnes and A. S. Byatt when they were both in New York. Susanna introduced me to her husband, who was in fact a tall man with blond hair—slightly older than he had appeared in the window, and more tentative. I asked myself: Do I preserve the illusion of privacy, or do I pierce it? I couldn't resist. "Ah, yes," I said, "I've been watching you. Last night it was a poached salmon, wasn't it? Served with what appeared to be a tarragon-butter sauce." The look that crossed his face—the panic of knowing something was going on but not knowing what it was—was not a happy expression to have witnessed. It made me feel, well, very bad.

That night, when I returned home, there they both were, standing by their kitchen sink, looking out across the courtyard at me. I was standing by my kitchen sink. I waved. I didn't know what else to do. Weakly, the tall blond man, in his apron again, waved back. That was six months ago. Since then we've steadfastly ignored each other, and I've managed to avoid that window entirely. New York had suddenly become a village. ♦



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ANNALS OF BIOGRAPHY

THE CITY-SHAPER

As New York City celebrates its centennial, the author of "The Power Broker" tells how he came to write the definitive book about the man who changed the city forever—often at a terrible cost.

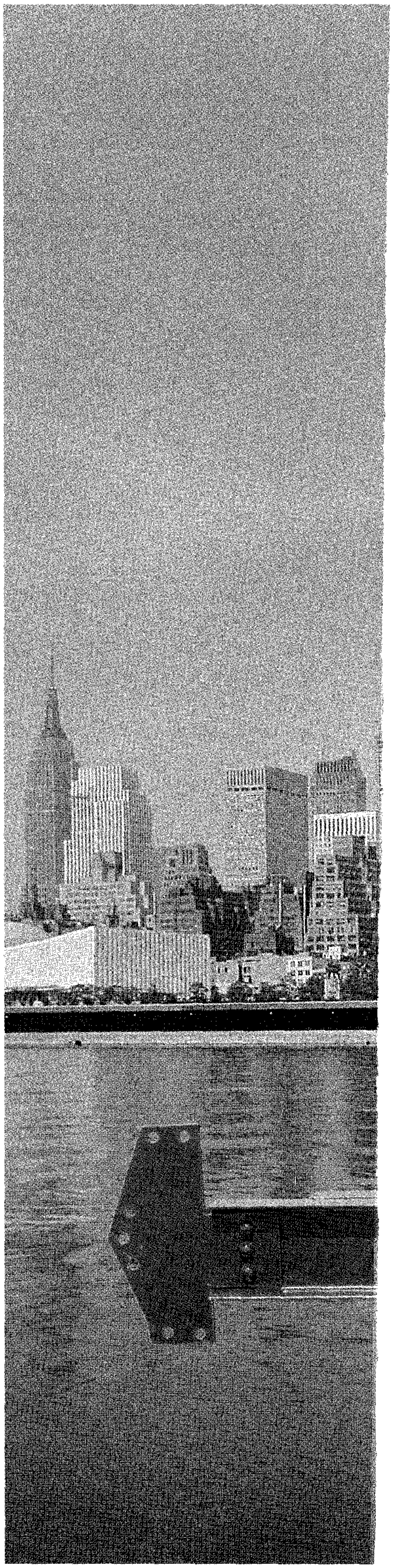
BY ROBERT A. CARO

BEYOND Jones Beach, the great park Robert Moses had built when he was young, was a little private community called Oak Beach, and Moses said our first interview would be in his summer cottage there. So I drove out from the Bronx that day in 1967, over bridges he had built (the Henry Hudson and the Triborough) after generations of city officials had been unable to build them, and over expressways he had built (the Cross-Bronx and the Major Deegan and the Bruckner) by ramming them straight through the crowded neighborhoods of New York, and over parkways he had built (the Grand Central and the Cross-Island and the Southern State and the Meadowbrook) when the most powerful forces in the state had sworn he would never build them.

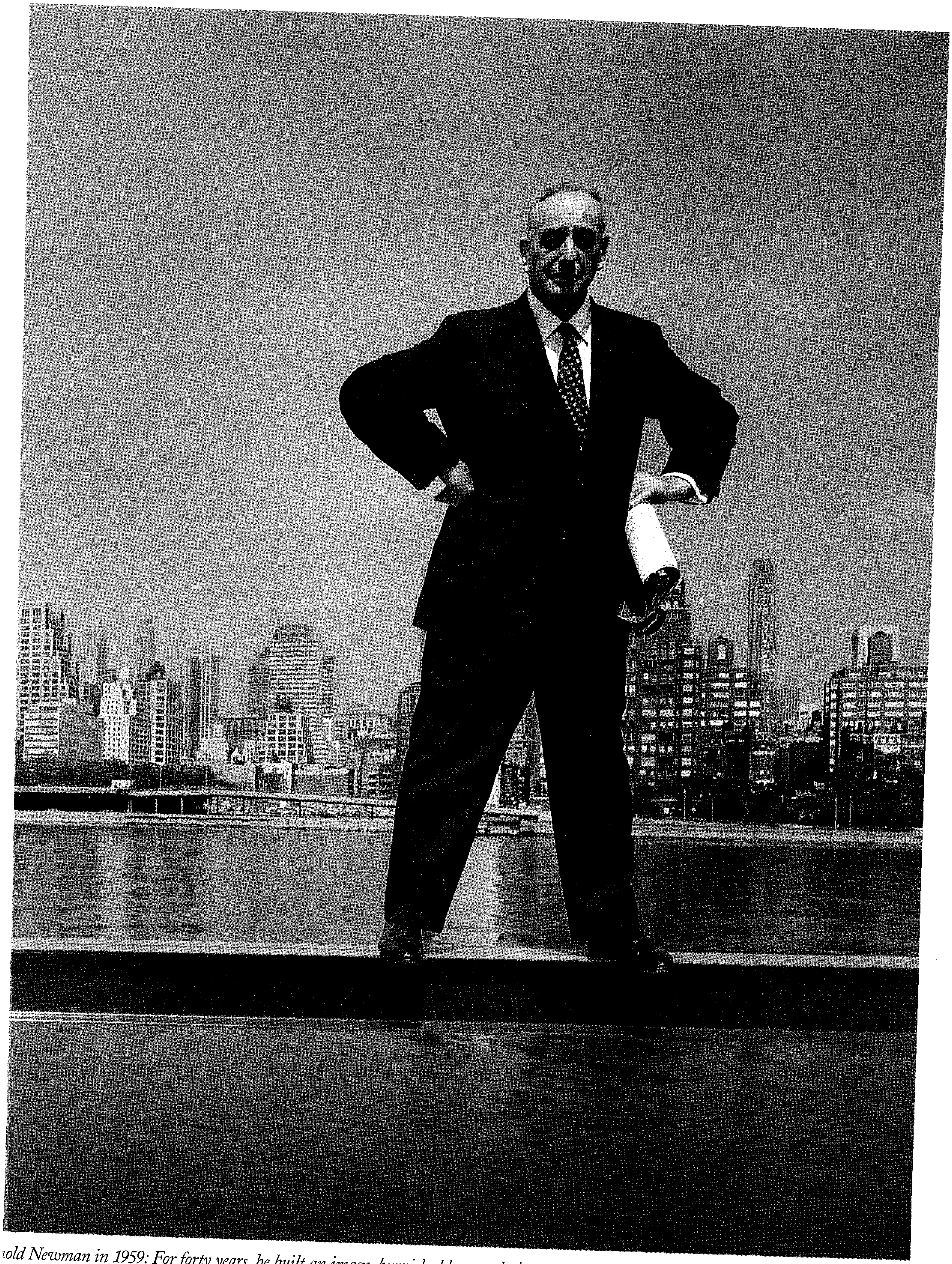
When I reached Oak Beach, and turned in through wooden gates that hung ajar, the colony seemed deserted in the preseason May chill: the little cottages set among the high dunes were empty and boarded up, and the narrow, graded road through the dunes had been covered by drifting sand, so there was no sign of life. And then I came around a curve. Suddenly, in a circle of dunes below a modest house was a long, gleaming black limousine, and, beside it, a black-uniformed chauffeur and three armed and booted parkway troopers. The chauffeur was lounging against the car, but although the troopers, members of an élite two-hundred-member unit that was in effect Moses' own private police force, were only there on an errand, they stood rigidly erect, as if they feared he might be watching them from the house above.

As I stepped out of my car, a tall woman—his wife—came out on the deck of the house and said that Commissioner Moses was ready to see me, and I climbed the stairs, and, with Mrs. Moses holding the door open, entered a large living room. It was plainly furnished, but most of its far end was glass—a huge picture window. Through the left portion of the window could be seen, about a mile beyond the house, the long low steel roadway and high center arch of the bridge that linked Long Island to the Fire Island barrier beach—the Robert Moses Causeway. Through the right portion could be seen, jutting into the sky, the partially completed two-hundred-foot-high red brick tower that was the centerpiece of the five-mile-long park at the end of Fire Island—the Robert Moses State Park. And in front of the window, in a big easy chair, sat Robert Moses. Looking up at me, framed by his monuments, he said, "So you're the young fellow who thinks he's going to write a book about me," and, standing up, he came toward me with a wide, warm grin on his weathered face.

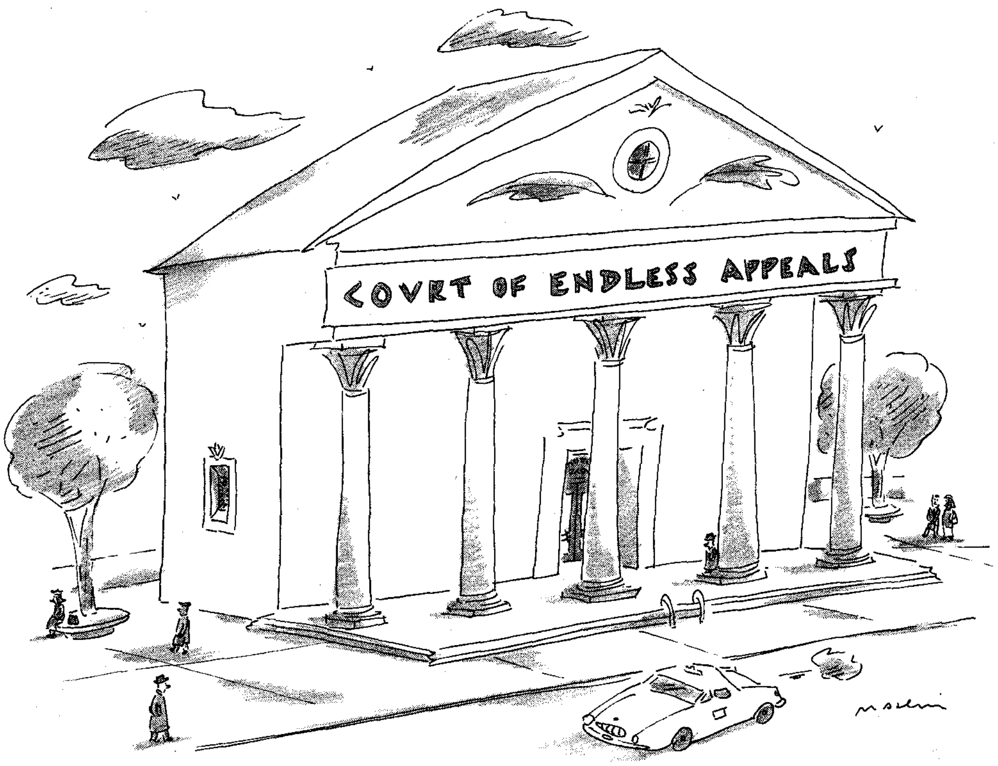
ALTHOUGH I had been working on his biography for almost two years, this was the first time I had met Robert Moses, the man who, more than any other individual, shaped modern New York, whose first century as a unified city we begin celebrating this week. Getting to meet him had not been easy. Although he had been the most powerful figure in New York City and New York State for more than forty years—more powerful than any mayor or any governor, or any mayor and governor combined—the only previous "biography" of him was a totally adulatory book written fifteen years before under his literally line-by-line supervision. Despite many other attempts, no writer had been able to do another book about him, and when I, then a reporter at *Newsday*, had written



Robert Moses photographe



nold Newman in 1959: For forty years, he built an image, burnished by an adoring press, of the very antithesis of a politician.



him in 1965 to propose the project, I was told that I wasn't going to do one, either. His two top public-relations aides, Murray Davis and Edward V. O'Brien, informed me—in two separate conversations, to make sure I got the idea—that I would have absolutely no access to his family, friends, or aides, to any state or city officials, or to his documents, or to him. Therefore, they said, they presumed I would be forgetting the idea of writing a biography of Commissioner Moses. And for almost two years he had, with some success, done his best to make sure that this prohibition stood. He was then at the very height of his power, with absolute discretion over the awarding of contracts by city or state in every field of public works, and the word had gone out that no architect, engineer, or contractor who spoke to me would ever receive another such contract. I had, however, drawn, on a piece of paper, a series of concentric circles around a dot that represented him. The innermost circle was his family, friends, and close associates, and I was prepared to believe that he could keep me from seeing them, and probably the persons in the next circle or two, also. But surely, I felt, there would be people in the outermost circle—people who knew him but were not in regular contact with him—who would be willing to talk to me. And, in fact, there were, and, as I was later to be told, Commissioner Moses was more and more frequently encountering people who, unaware of his feelings, said that this young reporter had been to see them. I was, moreover, spending a lot of time going through documents, including the papers of Moses' great patron in the nineteen-twenties, Governor Alfred E. Smith, in the New York State Archives in Albany, and nothing that went on in Albany escaped his notice. And one day in May, 1967, his daughter, Jane, had telephoned me to say that "Papa Bear" would see me. The aide closest to him, Sidney M. Shapiro, later told me the reason for his change of heart—or, at least, *a* reason. Because Mr. Shapiro and I were eventually to spend a great deal of time together, and he appeared to regard me with affection, this explanation may be too complimentary to me; however, no one ever gave me any other. He said that "RM," learning of my stubbornness despite his strictures, had concluded that at last someone had come along who was going to write the book whether he coöperated or not.

I HAD first been drawn to Robert Moses out of curiosity, in a very idle, fleeting form. As a new reporter at *Newsday* during the early nineteen-sixties, I would, as the occupant of an extremely low rung on the city-room totem pole, occasionally be assigned to write a short article based on one of the press releases that poured in a steady stream from one or another of the twelve governmental entities he headed, and as I typed "New York City Park Commissioner Robert Moses announced today . . ." I would wonder for a moment what that title had to do with the fact that he was also building something that was not a park, and was mostly not even in the city—the Long Island Expressway. I would type "Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority Chairman Robert Moses" and it would cross my mind that he was also chairman of some other public authority—actually, the New York State Power Authority—that was building gigantic hydroelectric power dams, some of the most colossal public works ever built by man, hundreds of miles north of the city, along some place with the romantic name of the "Niagara Frontier." It gradually sunk in on me that in one article or another I was identifying him as chairman or "sole member" of quite a few authorities: the Bethpage State Park Authority, the Jones Beach State Park Authority, the Henry Hudson Parkway Authority, the Marine Parkway Authority, the Hayden Planetarium Authority—the list seemed to go on indefinitely. And as, within a few months of my coming to *Newsday*, my interest began to narrow to politics, I began to wonder what a public authority was, anyway. They were always being written about simply as nonpolitical entities that were formed merely to sell bonds to finance the construction of some public work—a bridge or a tunnel, usually—to collect tolls on the work until the bonds were paid off, and then to go out of existence, and, in fact, a key element of the image of Robert Moses that had for forty years been created and burnished by him and by an adoring press was that he was the very antithesis of the politician, a public servant uncompromisingly above politics who never allowed political considerations to influence any aspect of his projects. After all, the reasoning went, he built most of his projects through public authorities, which were also outside politics.

No journalist or historian seemed to see authorities as sources of political power in and of themselves. I remember looking up every article on public authorities that had been written in newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals for some years past; there was not one that analyzed in any substantial way the potential in a public authority for political power. Yet, in some vague way, they certainly seemed to have some. Moreover, Robert Moses held still other posts—city posts, such as New York City Construction Coördinator, and chairman of the city's Slum Clearance Committee; and state posts, such as chairman of the State Council of Parks, and chairman of the Long Island State Park Commission. I began to feel that I was starting to glimpse, through the mists of public myth and my own ignorance, the dim outlines of something that I didn't understand and couldn't see clearly but that might be, in terms of political power, quite substantial indeed.

THEN I was drawn to Robert Moses by my imagination—by an image that lodged in it, and grew vivid.

The more I thought about Robert Moses, and about the power he exerted, and about my ignorance—and, it seemed to me, everyone's ignorance—concerning the extent of his power, and the sources behind it, the more apparent it became to me that trying to determine the extent and identify the sources, and then to explain what I found, was something beyond the scope of daily journalism; no newspaper, in the journalistic practices of that day, would give you the time to conduct such an exploration or the space to print what you found.

It would be necessary to do a book. And, while I was trying to decide whether I really wanted to write one on Robert Moses, I began reading material about him, and one of the things I read, in a typescript in the Columbia University Oral History Collection, was the oral history of Frances Perkins, who would later be Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor but in 1914 was a young reformer, who often spent her Sundays walking around New York City with another young reformer, Robert Moses.

Born on December 18, 1888, to a wealthy German Jewish family active in the settlement-house movement, Moses had been educated at Yale and Oxford, and had returned to New York to earn his Ph.D. in political science at Columbia and join a municipal-reform organization as a researcher. In 1914, at the age of twenty-five, he was filled with idealism—he had devised an elaborate plan to cleanse New York of Tammany Hall's influence by eliminating patronage from the city's corruption-ridden civil-service system—and with ideas, many of them about public works. "Everything he saw walking around the city made him think of some way that it could be better," Miss Perkins had told her oral-history interviewer. "He was always burning up with ideas, just burning up with them."

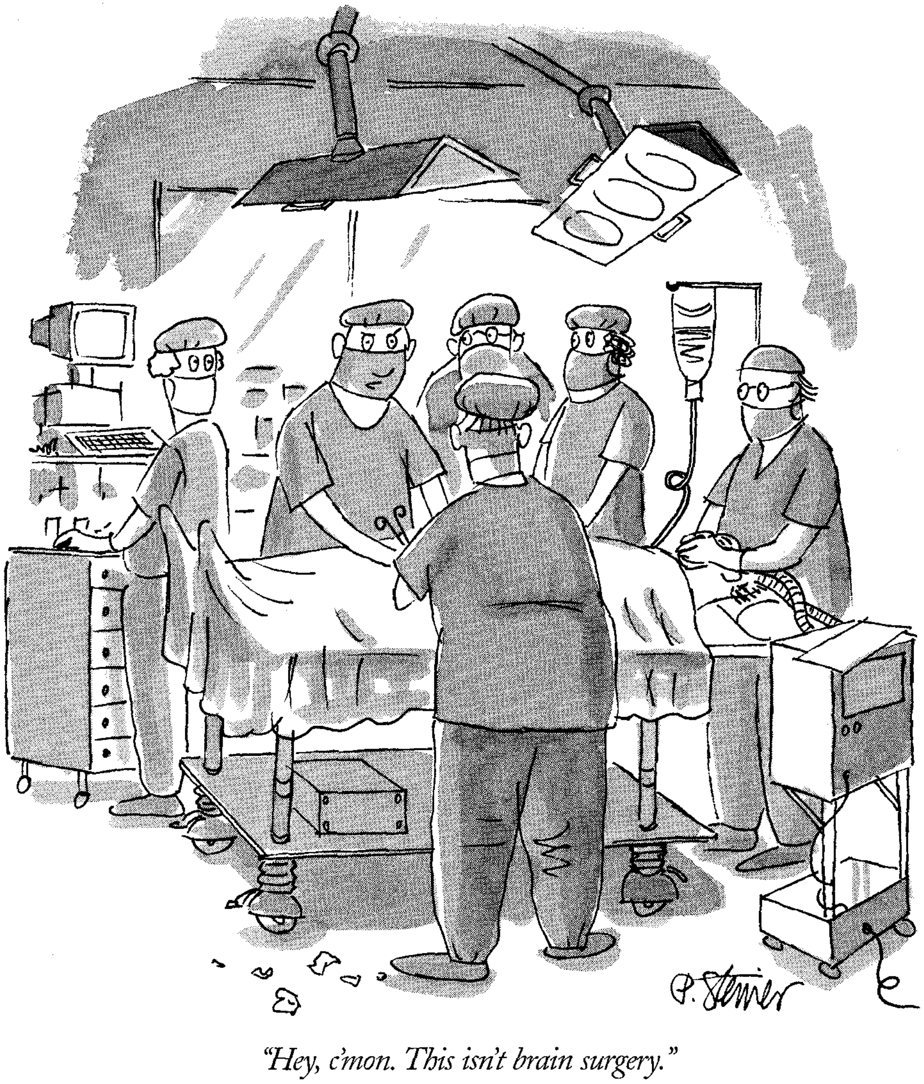
The biggest idea of all concerned the western shoreline of Manhattan Island from about Seventy-second Street up to about 181st Street. That six miles of shoreline, below the high cliff of Riverside Drive, was popularly called Riverside Park, but, unlike the park's landscaped upper level, in 1914 the part along the edge of the Hudson was nothing more than a six-mile-long wasteland of mud and rapidly eroding landfill, and through its entire length ran four tracks of the New York Central Railroad, lined by high, sharp-edged fences that for seventy years had cut the city off from its waterfront. Since the locomotives that towed the endless trains carrying cattle and pigs south to the slaughterhouses downtown burned coal or oil, the "park" seemed constantly covered with a thick, gritty, foul-smelling black smog. Huge mounds of raw garbage lay piled there, waiting for scows to collect it and carry it out to sea. There were several large shantytowns in it, inhabited by derelicts so intimidating that their shacks were avoided even by the police; at night, the residents of Riverside Drive apartment houses could see the derelicts' open fires glowing in the darkness by the river. But one Sunday in 1914, as a group of young men and women were taking a ferry to a picnic in New Jersey, Robert Moses was standing beside Frances Perkins on the deck, and as the ferry pulled out into the Hudson, and the bleak mudflats shrouded in smog spread out behind them, he suddenly said excitedly, "Isn't this a temptation to you? Couldn't this waterfront be the most beautiful thing in the world?" And, Miss Perkins was to recall, he began to talk, faster and faster, and she realized, to her amazement, that "he had it all figured out. How you could build a great highway that went uptown along the water. How you'd have to tear down a few buildings at Seventy-second Street and bring the highway around a curve," how the railroad tracks would be covered by the highway, and cars would be driving serenely along it with their passengers delighting in the river scene, how there would be long green parks filled with people playing tennis and baseball and riding bicycles, and elegant marinas for sailboats.

Looking up from the typescript (bound, I still remember, in a gray loose-leaf note-

"I'd trade, but peanut butter sticks to my tongue stud."

book), I realized that what Robert Moses had been talking about on that long-ago Sunday was what I knew as Riverside Park and the West Side Highway—the great park and road that, as long as I could remember, had formed the western waterfront of Manhattan Island. Although many other plans had been conceived for the waterfront, this immense public work would be built by him—in 1937, almost a quarter of a century after the ferry ride. And it would be built—this urban improvement on a scale so huge that it would be almost without precedent in early-twentieth-century America, this improvement that would, in addition, solve a problem that had baffled successive city administrations for decades—in very much the same form in which he had envisioned it as a young municipal reformer just out of college.

At the same time, moreover, from other oral histories, and brief references in articles, I was learning *how* Robert Moses had envisioned it—where he was standing when he did so, even what he might have been wearing. He lived then with his parents on Central Park West, but often, after work, he would tell his taxi-driver to take him instead to Riverside Drive, at the end of Seventy-sixth Street, overlooking the Hudson. And then, as the sun set behind the Palisades across the river, he would get out and stand staring down at the smog-covered wasteland below him. He was a striking young man—tall, very slim, darkly handsome, with olive skin and deep, burning eyes, elegant and arrogant—and fond of white suits, wearing them from early spring well into the autumn. And he was passionate when, defending his plan for civil-service reform, he talked night after night before hostile, Tammany-packed audiences, speaking into storms of invective—so passionate that another reformer was to say, "Once you saw him on those nights, you could never forget him." In my mind, I saw him now, staring down in the evenings on the Hudson waterfront, and I couldn't forget him. Sometimes, in my imagination, I saw him from below—a tall, handsome, haughty figure in white, standing on the edge of a high cliff and gazing down on a vast wasteland with the eyes of a creator, determined to transform it into something beautiful and grand. Sometimes, I saw him from behind—a tall black silhouette against the setting sun. Robert Moses gazing down on Riverside Park lodged in my imagination and, in my imagination, became entangled in a mystery. I had previously been aware only of the Robert Moses of the nineteen-fifties and sixties: the ruthless highway builder who ran his roads straight through hapless neighborhoods, the Robert Moses of the Title I urban-renewal scandals—some of the greatest scandals of twentieth-century New York, scandals almost incredible both for the colossal scale of their corruption (personally "money honest" himself, Moses dispensed to the most powerful members of the city's ruling Democratic political machine what one insider called "a king's ransom" in legal fees, public-relations retainers, insurance premiums, advance knowledge of highway routes and urban-renewal sites, and insurance-free deposits in favored banks, to insure their coöperation with his aims) and for the heartbreaking callousness with which he evicted the tens of thousands of poor people in his way, whom, in the words of one official, he "hounded out like cattle." Now I saw something very different: the young Robert Moses, the dreamer and idealist. How had the one man become the other?


P. Steiner

"Hey, c'mon. This isn't brain surgery."

AND, finally, I was drawn to Robert Moses by something that wasn't imagination at all but, in some ways, its opposite: by an insight, a hard, cold, and, I believed, rational calculation about what I wanted to do with my own work, and how it was through Robert Moses that I could do it.

As I began, little by little, to understand the magnitude of his impact on New York, I was beginning to feel that he could be a vessel for something even more significant: an examination of the essential nature—the most fundamental realities—of political power.

One of the reasons I believed I had become a reporter in the first place was to find out how things really worked and to explain those workings, and, as my focus had narrowed to politics, that reason had become to explain how political power really worked. And during the few years I had been a reporter I had convinced myself, in part because of the easy gratifications that go with the journalist's life—the bylines; the gratitude or the wary respect or fear that the subjects of your articles had for you, the awareness of friends or neighbors of what you were doing; the feeling that you were at the center of the action—that I was succeeding in doing what I had set out to do.

But the more I thought about Robert Moses' career, the more I understood that I had been deluding myself. In the terms in which I had always thought about New York politics, elected officials—mayors and governors in particular—were the principal repositories of the political power that plays so significant a role over our lives: in a democracy, after all, ultimate power theoretically comes from the ballot box. But Robert Moses had never been elected to anything. And yet Robert Moses had held power for forty-four years, between 1924 and 1968, through the administrations of five mayors and six governors, and, in the fields in which he chose to exercise it, his power was so enormous that no mayor or governor contested it. He held power, in other words, for almost half the century we observe this week—the century that began when, on January 1, 1898, the five boroughs were united into a single city (which became, with that unification, the greatest city in the New World). And during that century he, more than any mayor or governor, molded the city to his vision, put his mark upon it so deeply that today, thirty years after he left power, we are still, to an astonishing extent, living in the city he shaped.

The legislative act that unified New York created a city of five boroughs, but only one of them—the Bronx—was on the mainland of the United States, so the new city was really a city of islands. It was Robert Moses, more than any legislature or any other individual, who tied those islands together with bridges, soldering together three boroughs at once with the Triborough Bridge (and then tying two of them, the Bronx and Queens, even more firmly together with the Bronx-Whitestone and Throgs Neck Bridges), spanning the Narrows to Staten Island with the mighty Verrazano, tying the distant Rockaways firmly to the rest of the metropolis with the Marine and Cross-Bay spans, uniting the West Bronx and Manhattan with the Henry Hudson. Since 1917, seven great bridges have been built to link the boroughs together. Robert Moses built every one of those bridges.

He built every one of the expressways that cut across the city, carrying its people and its commerce—fifteen expressways, plus the West Side Highway and the Harlem River Drive. If a person is driving in New York on a road that has the word "expressway" in its title, he is driving on a road built by Robert Moses.

He built every one of the parkways that, within the city's borders, stretch eastward toward the counties of Long Island, and he built every one of the parkways that, beyond those borders, run far out into those counties, thereby shaping them as well as the city. There are eleven of those parkways in all. And he either built or rebuilt—rebuilt so completely that they became largely his creations also—five parkways stretching toward, or within, Westchester County, so that he built a total of sixteen parkways. In New York City and its suburbs, he built a total of six hundred and twenty-seven miles of expressways and parkways.

He created—or re-created, shaping to his philosophy of recreation—every park in the city, adding twenty thousand acres of parkland (and six hundred and fifty-eight playgrounds) in a city that had been starved for parks and playgrounds; since he left power, several new parks have been built, and several older parks—most notably Central Park—have been restored to their pre-Moses form, but most of New York's parks are still, today, essentially the parks of Robert Moses. And for the use of the city's residents he created, outside the city's borders, on Long Island, another forty thousand acres of parks, including not only Jones Beach, which may be the world's greatest oceanfront park and bathing beach, but other huge parks and beaches—Sunken Meadow, Hither Hills, Montauk Point, Bethpage, Belmont Lake, Hempstead Lake, and eight others.

And bridges, roads, parks, and beaches are only a part of the mark that Robert Moses left on New York. During the time in which he controlled—controlled absolutely—the New York City Housing Authority, the authority built 1,082 apartment houses, containing 148,000 apartments which housed 555,000 people: more people than, at the time, lived in Minneapolis. Those apartments are mainly for persons of low income. For persons of higher income, he created, under urban-renewal programs, tens of thousands of additional apartments. He was the dominant force, moreover, behind such supposedly "private" housing developments as Stuyvesant Town, Peter Cooper Village, Concord Village, and Co-op City—and such monumental features of the New York landscape as Lincoln Center, the United Nations headquarters, Shea Stadium, the New York Coliseum, and the campuses of Fordham, Pratt, and Long Island Universities. He changed the city's very shape, enlarging it by adding to its shoreline more than fifteen thousand acres of new land, tying together small islands within its borders with rock and sand and stone, so that, for example, Ward's Island and Randall's Island were united, and Hunters and Twin Islands were joined to Rodman's Neck, so that their combined area would be big enough to hold the mile-long crescent of his Orchard Beach creation. He built public works that, even in 1968 dollars, cost $27 billion (a figure that would have to be multiplied many times to put it in today's dollars). He was the greatest builder in the history of America, perhaps in the history of the world.

He shaped the city physically not only by what he built but by what he destroyed. To build his expressways, he evicted from their homes two hundred and fifty thousand persons, in the process ripping out the centers of a score of neighborhoods, many of them friendly, vibrant communities that had made the city a home to its people. To build his non-highway public works, he evicted perhaps two hundred and fifty thousand more; a 1954 City Planning Commission study of just seven years of Robert Moses' eviction policy was to call it "an enforced population displacement completely unlike any previous population movement in the City's history." And, since the people he evicted were overwhelmingly black, Hispanic, and poor, the most defenseless of the city's people, and since he refused, despite the policy of the city's elected officials, to make adequate provision (to make any substantial provision at all, really) for their relocation, the policies he followed created new slums almost as fast as he was eliminating old ones and, tragically, were to be a major factor in solidifying the already existing ghettoization of New York—the dividing up of its residents by color and income.

Immense as was Robert Moses' physical shaping of New York, however, his influence on the city's history cannot be measured merely by the physical. All told, during the decades of his power he used that power to bend the city's social policies to his philosophical beliefs, skewing, often despite the wishes of its mayors and other elected officials, the allocation of the city's resources to the benefit of its middle, upper middle, and upper classes at the expense of the city's lower middle class and its poor, and particularly at the expense of the new immigrants. These were blacks and Puerto Ricans, mainly, who had begun arriving in New York in substantial numbers not long after he came to power in the city. His power also has to be measured by zoning policies on Long Island that guaranteed suburban sprawl, and by decades of systematic starvation of the subways and commuter railroads that he viewed as rivals for his roads and the revenue they produced, a policy that exacerbated the highway congestion that has made traffic jams an inescapable part of New Yorkers' lives.

The more I thought about Robert Moses' career, the more I realized that his story and the story of New York City were, to a remarkable degree, one story.

And the more I thought about Moses' accomplishments, the more I realized that I had no idea—as, apparently, no one had any idea—of what the political power was that had enabled him to achieve them, of how he had acquired that power, or, aside from the sketchiest details, of how he had used it. And therefore I came to feel that if what I had for so long wanted to do was to discover and disclose the fundamentals of true political power—not theoretical political power but the raw, naked essence of such power—then perhaps the best way to do that was through portraying the life of Robert Moses.

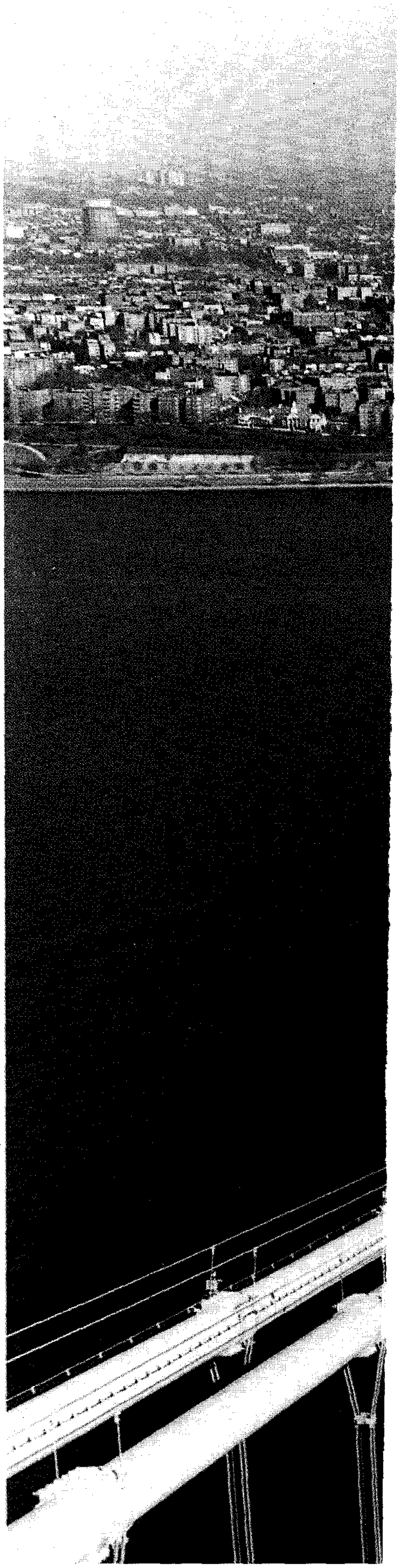
WHATEVER the reason, or reasons, that he finally agreed to see me, my interviews with Robert Moses—there would, over the next year, be seven of them; long interviews, one lasting from nine-thirty in the morning until well into the evening—were worth any trouble it had taken to get them. They were less interviews, perhaps, than monologues. Questions were not encouraged. I would raise a subject, and Moses would thereupon embark on a discourse about it that might take an hour or more, and if I attempted to interrupt to clarify a point, the interruption might or might not be acknowledged.

But, at least at first, who wanted to interrupt? I had thought I understood something—had thought I understood quite a bit, in fact—about the inner processes of political decision-making, and about urban planning and government in general. From the moment Robert Moses started talking, I never thought that again.

He seemed to remember every vote—even votes from forty years before—and why it had been cast. "On the Jones Beach appropriation, it was eight to seven against us in Ways and Means," he would say. "But the key was this little upstate guy [and he named some long-forgotten state assemblyman], and he had a mortgage coming due on his farm, and the mortgage was held by a bank up there, and the key to the bank was Hewitt [Charles J. Hewitt, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee], and the Governor knew how to get to Hewitt, so it was eight to seven for us."

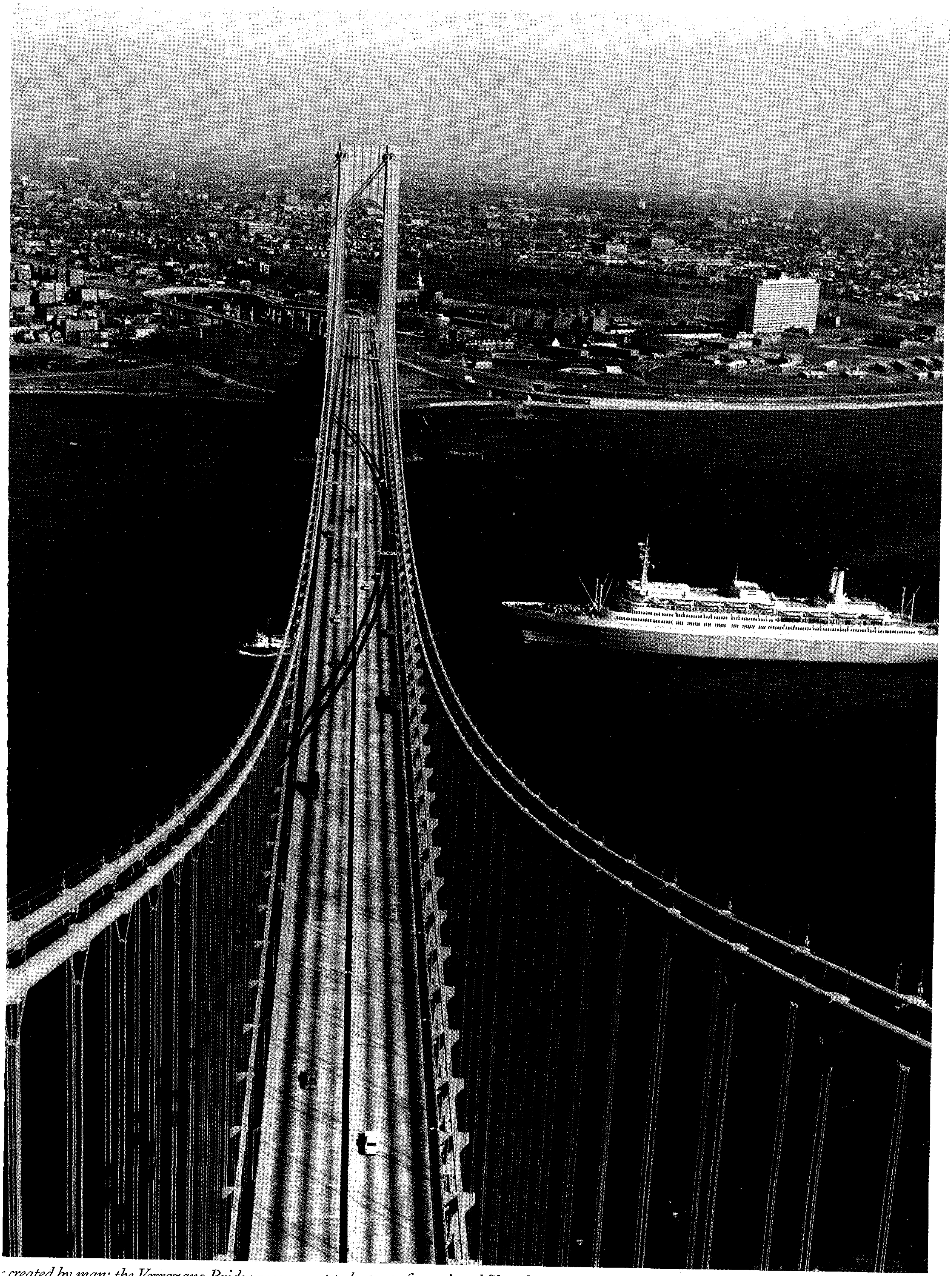
He seemed to remember every decision, and how decisions had been changed—how, for example, the use of liquor had been helpful in effecting some changes, particularly during the Prohibition Era, with upstate Republican legislative leaders who liked to drink but who would never be forgiven by their rabidly dry constituents should it be learned that they did so, and who were therefore all the thirstier at the weekend parties that Al Smith, the Democratic governor, threw for them at the Long Island sites for which Moses wanted legislative appropriations ("They hated my guts," Robert Moses told me, with that wonderful smile. "But they all loved the Governor, so they came"), and at which, as Moses put it, sitting in front of the big window, "we fed them liquor."

One such reception was attended by the State Senate Majority Leader, John Knight, who had been blocking Moses' appropriations for two years; who during the just completed 1925 legislative session had accused Moses, his voice shaking with rage, of "lawlessness and a violation of sacred constitutional property



Moses built some of the most colossal public u

MTA BRIDGES AND TUNNELS SPECIAL ARCHIVE



created by man: the Verrazano Bridge was meant to be part of a projected Shorefront Drive connecting Staten Island to the tip of Long Island.

rights"; and who, when a reporter asked him if there was any possibility of his relaxing his opposition in future sessions, had replied, "I don't change my mind very often, do I?"

"We were opening a bathhouse at Sunken Meadow," Moses recalled. "We had cases of Scotch and bourbon that we were feeding to the fellows and Knight disappeared." Trying to enter the bathhouse, Moses said, he had found the door jammed, and when he finally pushed it open he discovered that what had been blocking it was Knight, who was sitting on the floor, dead drunk, trying to hold the door shut with his foot while he poured "a whole bottle" down his throat. "I said, 'You lousy bastard.' He was so embarrassed he didn't know what to say"—and thereafter, if Knight didn't formally change his mind, his fear of exposure led him to drastically soften his opposition.

Moses remembered subtler, and more brutal, means of decision-changing, too. Once, in an infrequent interruption, I asked him about one of Mayor Robert F. Wagner's deputy mayors, Henry Epstein. Epstein had long been a Moses ally. "A very able lawyer," Moses had said earlier. "Outstanding lawyer. I had known him a long time." But in 1953 Epstein was standing in Moses' way, telling Mayor Wagner that there was no rational reason for Moses to shove the Cross-Bronx Expressway through the East Tremont neighborhood of the Bronx on a route that, in just one mile, would require the demolition of fifty-four separate apartment houses when there was another, parallel route, which would require the demolition of exactly six small brownstone tenements, just two blocks away. And then Epstein had abruptly changed his mind, and had written a letter to Wagner saying he had been wrong and that Moses' route was better.

I asked Moses why Epstein had changed his mind.

He changed it, Moses said, "after he was hit over the head with an axe."

When I asked him what he meant, he said, "I won't tell you what we did to him." But in the course of the interview he did tell me, if obliquely.

He had, he said, put "our bloodhounds"—the team of investigators who compiled the dossiers on other city officials which Moses leaked to newspapers if an official opposed him—on Epstein. And then, he said, he had had a talk with Epstein, who was married, and the conversation had included some references to a woman. "A lot of personal stuff got into it," Moses recalled. "I said, 'This woman, this chum of yours.' He said, 'She's not my chum.' I said, 'Oh, yes, she is. She's your chum, all right.'

"So," Robert Moses said, with his broad, charming smile, "Henry wrote his letter."

AND he remembered things a lot bigger than votes, or decisions, and in the remembering taught me about something much larger than the workings of politics: about a particular type of vision, of imagination, that was unique and so intense that it amounted to a very rare form of genius—not the genius of the poet or the artist, which was the way I had always thought about genius, but a type of genius that was, in its own way, just as creative: a leap of imagination that could look at a barren, empty landscape and conceive on it, in a flash of inspiration, a colossal public work, a permanent, enduring creation.

As I had thought about Robert Moses gazing down at Riverside Park, my imagination had been filled with the picture of Robert Moses as dreamer. Now Robert Moses taught me about dreams, all right, including a dream much bigger than Riverside Park. Suddenly coming up out of the big chair, seizing my arm in a grip that belied his seventy-eight years, he drew me out of the Oak Beach cottage, down the steps, and up to the top of a sand dune, from which I could see down the Great South Bay and the barrier beach. "There was nothing there then," he said. "Nothing." And, standing there on the dune, a broad-shouldered old man with very young gray eyes, the wind whipping his sparse white hair around his olive face, Robert Moses told me how he had first thought of a park on Jones Beach.

In 1922, Al Smith, who had rescued him from oblivion—four years before, at the age of thirty, Robert Moses, his dreams for Riverside Park and civil-service reform shattered, was standing on line outside the city hall in Cleveland, Ohio, applying, in vain, for a minor municipal job; it was the next year that Smith gave him his first taste of power—had assigned Moses as his "observer" at the Good Government organizations that wanted parks outside the cities for the urban masses who suddenly, with the advent of mass-production technology and the resultant shorter workweek, had leisure time to enjoy the countryside and, with the invention of the Model T Ford, automobiles to get to it. No one in the United States, however, seemed able to conceive of parks large enough, or of means to get people to them, and on the mainland of Long Island the problem seemed particularly insoluble. Virtually every foot of desirable beachfront was in the hands either of local municipalities, determined to bar them to the city's immigrant "foreigners," or of America's robber barons, who had established their great strongholds on the Island's Gold Coast. Their immense wealth had brought them immense political power, and on Long Island the roads were kept deliberately narrow and unpaved. But during the summer of 1922 Robert Moses had rented a vacation bungalow in Babylon, on Long Island's South Shore, and had, he told me now, "fallen in love" with "the bay, with the whole South Shore." Purchasing an old, broad-bottomed, very slow motorboat, partly covered with an awning—a vessel his wife named the Bob—he spent the summer exploring the bay, often so lost in reverie that he would forget time and tide, and find himself stranded on a sandbar. He told me how sometimes he would sail over to the barrier beach ("about over there," he said, pointing down the bay), which was then just a strip of dunes and beach grass and wild marshes about five miles offshore (it had been named after a seventeenth-century privateer, Major Thomas Jones) and looked like a low line on the horizon, and he would pull the Bob ashore and step out.

Often, when he did so, he would step into a world in which there was not a single other person in sight. All there was, stretching before him for miles until it disappeared at the horizon, was that strip of spotless white sand, sloping on one side into the ocean, rising on the other into

low dunes separated by long grayish-green marshes. Something in that wild, desolate, barren scene attracted him; he must have returned to it, he said, a hundred times, pulling his little boat through the reeds, to sit alone on the beach. And then one day, he told me, he realized with a jolt that the spot on which he was sitting—this spot so cut off from the rest of the world—was less than twenty-five miles from Times Square. If a park could be built on that spot, the masses of New York City would have, at a stroke, a great bathing beach. All that was needed was a road to bring people out there from the city. He told me that at first the problem of acquiring from hostile Long Island the right-of-way for such a road seemed insuperable, but that he was commuting to Babylon that summer on the Long Island Rail Road and he had suddenly noticed that between some of the villages there were thick bands of woods. He told me how one weekend he went to Babylon Town Hall and asked what the woods were, and found that they were New York City's old, long-unused "reservoir properties," and realized that they were therefore publicly owned, not by Long Island municipalities but by New York City itself, and realized that if the road ran through them much of the right-of-way wouldn't have to be purchased or condemned. And, since one of the properties—the one at Wantagh—ran all the way down to the bay, another road, connecting with the road coming out from New York, could be built south down to the bay without any purchase or condemnation at all. And, since the bay was so shallow, it ought to be easy to construct a causeway from the end of the road to the barrier beach. "That was the idea behind Jones Beach and the Southern State Parkway," Robert Moses told me. "I thought of it all in a moment." Standing there beside me, the wind whipping his hair, the grip on my arm still tight, the gray eyes burning, he was young again, the youthful visionary who had dreamed a dream of a beach and a park and a parkway system greater than the world had ever seen.

"Son, it's important to remember that it's O.K. to be depressed."

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THE genius of which he was giving me an understanding was, furthermore, a genius vast in scope—a creative, shaping imagination on a scale so colossal that individual projects, even projects as monumental as the West Side Highway or Jones Beach, were only details within its sweep, an imagination broad enough so that it could take as its medium an entire city and the city's far-flung, sprawling suburbs, and not just a city but the greatest city in the Western world: New York, Titan of cities.

Two of my interviews with Robert Moses were conducted in an office he had on Randall's Island—where he was also framed in a big window by one of his monuments, this one the toll plaza of the Triborough Bridge—and dominating that office was an immense map of the New York region. When he began talking to me about his accomplishments and his plans for future accomplishments, he often stepped out from behind his desk and stood in front of the map, pointing at the relevant places with a sharp-pointed yellow pencil in his hand, and, standing there, he was the artist in front of his canvas. The pencil would make big, sweeping gestures over the map, or sharp, precise jabs toward it: "You see, if we put the road there, there'll be room for parks there and there—see that, just a ribbon park, but big enough to do the job—and over there we'll have room for the baseball diamonds, and if we do that, then the housing can be here. . . ." The canvas was gigantic—a metropolitan region of twenty-one hundred square miles in which there lived in 1967 fourteen million people. And the pencil waved over all of it at once as he discussed Staten Island and Suffolk County, Manhattan and Montauk, SoHo and Scarsdale, in the same sentences. I realized that the man standing before me saw the whole canvas—city, suburbs, slums, beaches, bridges, tunnels, airports, Central Park and vest-pocket parks—as one, a single whole, which he wanted to shape as a whole. When Robert Moses talked like that, standing in front of his beloved map, I was as thrilled as Frances Perkins must have been thrilled that day on the ferry, and I understood better the mind that could look down from Riverside Drive on a mudflat and see a great highway and a great park. I also understood better the mind of a sculptor who wanted to sculpt not clay or stone but a whole metropolis: I saw the genius of the city-shaper.

When he talked, moreover, you saw

how the dreams—and the will to accomplish them—were still burning, undimmed by age.

Often, when Robert Moses sat reminiscing to me at Oak Beach, he did so half turned away from me in the big chair, staring out the long picture window. I had thought he was staring at the bridge named after him and the park named after him—at the things he had accomplished.

Then, one day, he started talking about the park, and said that the thing to remember about it was that it was just "a gateway . . . to other areas." I realized that he was talking about a highway—a four-lane highway atop an eighteen-foot-high dike—he wanted to build the length of Fire Island, from Robert Moses State Park, at its western end, to Smith Point, near its eastern end—some twenty miles—where it would link up with another big causeway that would carry it back to the Long Island mainland, where it would run through the Hamptons and all the way out to Hither Hills and Montauk State Parks, which he had created during the nineteen-twenties. Intense opposition from Fire Island communities—opposition entirely understandable, since the broad highway would destroy the very qualities of peacefulness and beauty that made the narrow island precious to its residents—had stopped the project some years before, and the communities believed it had been stopped permanently.

That, however, I now realized, was not Robert Moses' opinion. "The road is going to come," he said firmly. "It's *got* to come."

Looking at me, he saw, I guess, that I was unconvinced, and stood up and walked out onto the deck facing the park and Fire Island, gesturing to me to come with him, and, standing there, pointing at Fire Island, he began to explain that the twenty miles of road on Fire Island was an integral part of something much bigger: a great Shorefront Drive, all the way from Staten Island to Montauk Point—a distance of a hundred and sixty miles—which he had planned in 1924. Parts of that drive—expressways on Staten Island, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, the Belt Parkway, in Brooklyn, the Ocean Parkway along Jones Beach—were already built, but there were still gaps, including that gap on Fire Island.

And then Robert Moses saw that I still wasn't agreeing, and he whirled on me. Suddenly you forgot the paunch and the liver spots. All you could see were those eyes. He grabbed my right arm above the elbow. To this day, I can feel the grip of those fingers as Robert Moses, shoving his face close to mine and glaring at me, said, "*Can't you SEE there ought to be a road there*?" Driving home that night, I realized that when Robert Moses was looking out the window at the bridge and the park he hadn't been thinking about them—about the things he had built.

He had been thinking about the things he hadn't built.

He had unveiled a plan of bridges, tunnels, expressways, parkways, and parks for the metropolitan region almost forty years earlier, on February 25, 1930, when, before five hundred civic leaders assembled in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Commodore for the Park Association's annual dinner, he pulled a drape away from a huge map of New York City hanging behind the dais—a map covered with red lines indicating highways and bridges and tunnels, and green areas representing tens of thousands of acres he wanted to acquire for new parks. For almost forty years, he had been filling in that map, turning lines into concrete, green ink into green spaces. But in 1967 his outline was still far from completed. He had built a network of great urban roads—far more urban roads than any other man in history—but there were gaps in that network: gaps on Manhattan Island, where a Lower Manhattan Expressway, across Broome Street, and a Mid-Manhattan Expressway, across Thirtieth Street (an eight-lane highway a hundred feet in the air, above some of the busiest streets in the world, through a forest of skyscrapers), and an Upper Manhattan Expressway, at 125th Street, would, he was sure, solve the metropolitan region's worsening traffic congestion, and other gaps, like the one on Fire Island. On that porch, I had felt the force of the determination of this seventy-eight-year-old man to fill in those gaps. Since he had decided to coöperate with me, he had let it be known that others could talk to me, too, and now I found it easier to believe that they had not been exaggerating when they described the savage energy Robert Moses had put behind his dreams, and his fury when they were checked: how, mapping out strategies for overcoming obstacles, he would pace back and forth across his office, hour after hour; how the palm of his big right hand would smash down, over and over again, on the table as he talked; how he would lunge out of his chair and begin, as one aide put it, "waving his arms, just wild," pick up the old-fashioned glass inkwell on his desk and hurl it at aides so that it shattered against a wall; how he would pound his clenched fists into the walls

"They're dividing into three groups, Sire. Infantry, cavalry, and media."

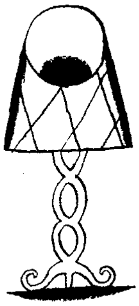
hard enough to scrape the skin off them, in a rage beyond the perception of pain.

DURING the same months in which I was interviewing Robert Moses, however, I was interviewing people whose lives had been touched by Robert Moses.

Some of them were in the East Tremont neighborhood, with whose fate Henry Epstein had been involved.

One of the implications of Robert Moses' career that I was examining was the human cost of the fifteen massive expressways he had built within the city itself. What had been the effect of these giant roads on the neighborhoods in their paths, and on the residents of these neighborhoods? I had decided to try to show this by focussing on one neighborhood, and had selected East Tremont, through which, during the nineteen-fifties, he had built the Cross-Bronx Expressway on that route which had demolished a solid mile of six- and seven-story apartment houses—fifty-four of them—thereby destroying the homes of several thousand families, although there was available just two blocks away the parallel route that would have required the demolition of only six tenements—but which would have also required the demolition of the "Tremont Depot" of the Third Avenue Transit Company, in which several key Bronx Democratic politicians had hidden interests, and which they didn't want condemned.

Up until the day—December 4, 1952—on which the eviction notices signed by "Robert Moses, City Construction Coordinator" and giving the recipients ninety days to move, arrived, East Tremont had been a low-income but stable community of sixty thousand persons, predominantly Jewish but with sizable Irish and German populations. Its residents had been poor—pressers, finishers, and cutters in the downtown garment district—and their apartment houses were old, some without elevators and almost all with aging plumbing. But the rooms were big and high-ceilinged—"light, airy, spacious" was how the residents described them to me—and the apartment houses were precious to the people who lived in them, because, rent-controlled as they were, their residents could afford, so long as they kept them, to live in their community. As long as they had those apartments, they had a lot—a sense of community and continuity; in some of those buildings, two and three generations of the same families were living; young couples who moved away often moved back. "The reason we moved back to that area was that we loved it so much," said one young woman who had moved back shortly before the notices came. "There was no reason for an older person to be lonely in that neighborhood," said one who lived there. If they lost their apartments, they knew, they could not afford to live in the city, and would be scattered to the winds. And then the notices from Moses arrived. "It was like the floor opened up underneath your feet," one woman told me. "There was no warning. We just got it in the mail. Everybody on the street got it the same day. A notice. We had ninety days to get out. . . . We all stood outside—'Did you get the letter?' 'Did you get the letter?' Three months to get out!" (There was no need for such haste: construction of the East Tremont section of the expressway would not, as Moses was aware, begin for three years. The ninety-day warning was merely "to shake 'em up a little and get 'em moving," a Moses aide explained to me.)



The community tried to fight. It was an era before community protests became newsworthy, and the protests they made received scant notice in a press that in those days did not give much space to such protests, but they fought hard, led by a young housewife, Lillian Edelstein, who had never imagined herself in such a role but felt she had no choice ("What if we were separated? What would Mom do? I was fighting for my home. And my mother. And sister. And daughter. I had a lot to fight for") and who turned out to possess not merely energy and determination but an indefinable, and inspiring, air of command. And since every one of their elected officials—their assemblyman and their state senator, as well as Bronx Borough President James J. Lyons and Mayor Wagner—was, at first, on their side, they thought they had a chance. In the New York City of the nineteen-fifties, however, when it came to the construction of large-scale public-works projects, what counted was not what elected officials wanted but what Robert Moses wanted, and in a very short time the residents lost—and Moses immediately began to apply the "relocation" techniques he had perfected on other projects.

As soon as the City Real Estate Bureau took title to the buildings, the heat and the hot water were cut off in many of them, and for much of the ensuing winter the only warmth for the families trying to remain in their apartments came from small, inadequate electric heaters they themselves bought or gas ranges turned on all the time. The building superintendents had been fired, so there were no services. Some of the tenants began to move, and as soon as the top floor of an apartment house was empty, the roof and that top floor would be torn off. "While people were still living in it, they were tearing it down around their heads!" Mrs. Edelstein told me. When an apartment on a lower floor was vacated, its windows were boarded up—a signal to looters that there were empty premises to be broken into. All requests for watchmen, as for heat and hot water and superintendents, were referred by the city agencies to Moses, who simply ignored them. The looters came: at night, the remaining tenants could hear them tearing the pipes out of the wall to be sold for scrap. A few small frame houses that were on the route were torn down, and their lumber stacked in their back yards—and fires were set. When the first apartment houses were completely emptied, their basements were left as gaping pits filled with broken glass and jagged shafts of steel. Despite parents' pleas, no fences were built around them, and the parents lived in fear that their children would fall into them. Demolition on so immense a scale had other consequences—"The rats were running like cats and dogs in the street," Mrs. Edelstein was to recall. Grime filled the air so thickly that sometimes the neighborhood seemed to have been hit by a dust storm.

In a very short time, the fifty-four buildings were gone. Then, after construction started, there came month upon month and year after year of earth-shaking dynamite blasts, since the expressway was, in that neighborhood, being cut through a trench in solid bedrock. The air was filled with rock dust from the great excavation—a deep gash in the earth a hundred and twenty feet wide and a mile long, through which rumbled mammoth earthmoving machines and herds of bulldozers and dump trucks—and the gritty dust seeped into rooms even through doors and windows that had been closed and sealed with towels. East Tremont had, of course, been cut in half by the road, and the southern half was isolated from the shopping area along East Tremont Avenue, and it was hard for the remaining residents to get to stores. The residents of the apartment houses that bordered the mile-long excavation on both sides—perhaps one hundred buildings—began to move out, and as more and more moved one of the principal reasons for staying—friends who lived near you—began to vanish, and so did the sense of community. Still more tenants disappeared from East Tremont. Some landlords were happy to see them leave the rent-controlled apartments, and replaced them with welfare families, who demanded fewer services and moved more often, so that rents could be raised more often. The gyre of urban decay spiralled and widened, faster and faster, and more and more residents began to move. East Tremont became a vast slum.

I spent many days and weeks, terrible days and weeks, walking around that slum.

I had never, in my sheltered middle-class life, descended so deeply into the realms of despair. When I entered these buildings, on the floors of their lobbies would be piles of animal or human feces, and raw garbage spilling out of broken bags; the floors were covered so thickly with shards of broken glass that my feet would crunch on it as I walked. The walls would have been broken open and the pipes ripped out, for sale by junkies. An atmosphere of fear hung over East Tremont, of course. I remember one elderly man, with a kindly face, sitting on a stoop; "You're going to be out of here by dark, aren't you?" he asked me. When he feared he hadn't made himself clear enough, he added, "Don't be around this place after dark!" I remember the people who lived in these buildings: almost all were black or Hispanic. Wanting to interview them to find out what living in East Tremont was like, I would knock on the doors of apartments. Over and over again, in my recollection, the same scene would be repeated. At my knock, there would be a scurry of children's feet behind the door, but no reply. If I persisted in my knocking, I would hear footsteps coming to the door, and then a voice—in my recollection it was always the voice of a little boy—would ask, through the closed door, the same question: "Are you the man from the welfare?" Usually, when I said I wasn't, the door wouldn't be opened. Sometimes, however, it was, and I would be allowed inside—and sometimes that was worse. To this day, I see, in my mind, a black woman, about thirty years old, sitting with several little children around her; no matter what question I asked, she replied, "I've got to get my kids out of here. I've got to get my kids out of here."

If the days I spent interviewing residents of the great East Tremont slum were terrible, the days I spent interviewing former residents of East Tremont—people who had lived there before it became a slum—weren't much better. These people had lived in East Tremont when it had been a neighborhood, their neighborhood, and they had been driven away by Robert Moses, either by the demolition of their homes or by the neighborhood's consequent deterioration. Their stories, too, were part of the human cost of this highway, and I wanted to find as many of them as possible and interview them.

I found them in a great variety of locales. Some—the luckiest or the most affluent ones—had found apartments in sterile high-rise middle-class housing developments in far reaches of the Bronx. Some, less affluent, were living in small—in many cases, too small—apartments in various neighborhoods in the Bronx or in Queens or in Brooklyn. Others were living with their children in the Westchester or Long Island suburbs. And still others, the unluckiest, had come to rest in "the projects," the city's immense, low-income, and quite dangerous public housing.

I asked these couples—or widows or widowers—to compare their present lives with the lives they had had in East Tremont, and the general picture that emerged from their answers was a sense of profound, irremediable loss, a sense that they had lost something—physical closeness to family, to friends, to stores where the owners knew you, to synagogues where the rabbi had said Kaddish for your parents (and perhaps even your grandparents) as he would one day say Kaddish for you, to the crowded benches on Southern Boulevard where your children played baseball while you played

SKETCHBOOK
BY AL HIRSCHFELD

GEORGE'S TURN

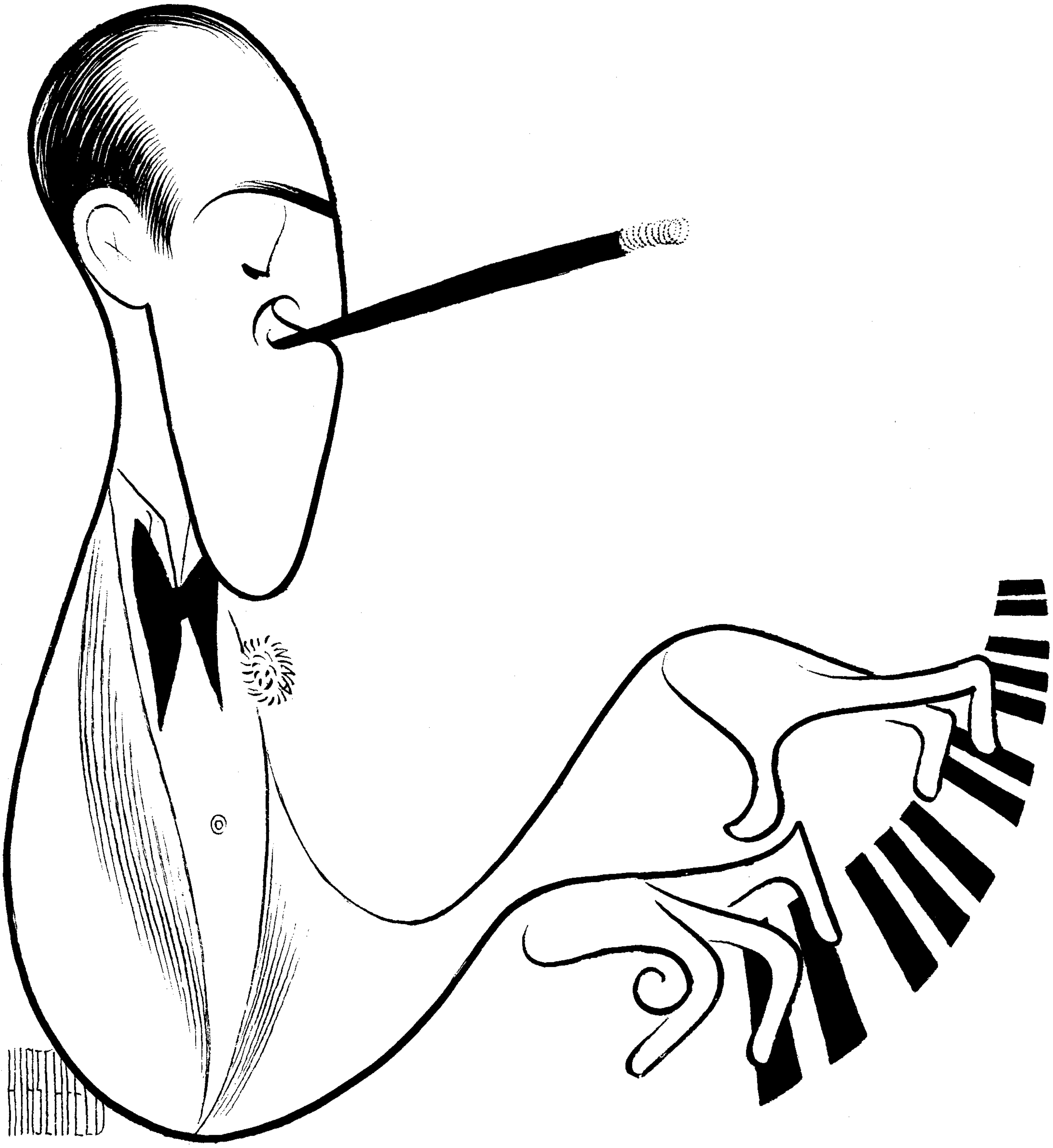
THE centennial celebrations for Ira Gershwin are over, but hurrahs will soon begin for George, who was born in September of 1898. Famously serious (almost humorless), passionate about his music, assiduous as a lover, and handsome in a totemic kind of way, George had one foot in European light classical music and the other in American jazz. Although he could never quite play jazz on the piano, it infiltrated his best songs, which have jazz bones and seem to move rhythmically without even being performed.

So let us begin the celebrations for Gershwin by listening to my brilliant friend Anna Hamburger, who knew him in the twenties, when she was a teen-ager. "My first cousin Leonore Strunsky married Ira," she told me recently, "and my sister Rosamond and I became part of the huge Gershwin clan. We had lunch with George in his gorgeous Riverside Drive penthouse and watched him take an astonishing—in those days—long-distance telephone call from California. We'd see him on the Jersey Shore, at the Atlantic Hotel, which was owned by my aunt, Masha Strunsky. George loved tennis, and once, as he ran onto the court at the hotel, he handed me this cashmere jacket—it had a blue weave, I remember—and said, 'You can hold my coat, Anna.' I did, and it was an almost sensual pleasure. He courted Rosamond, who was very beautiful, but of course he never married anyone, and to this day Rosamond refuses to talk about him. When we were both at Swarthmore, George sent her one of the first portable radios, and when I went down to her room she and her roommate were listening to the radio in their overcoats with the windows wide open, and she said, 'We can't close the windows, Anna, because we have to let the airwaves in.'

"George had the ego of genius, and he accepted the adulation that constantly surrounded him as effortlessly as his admirers accepted his ego and his latest news, whether it had to do with his health or with the title of his newest song."

—WHITNEY BALLIETT

AL HIRSCHFELD COURTESY MARGO FEIDEN GALLERIES


HIRSCHFELD

chess: a feeling of togetherness, a sense of community that was very precious, and that they knew they would never find again.

And when I tried, just briefly and very gingerly, to raise the issue of human costs with Robert Moses, there was a certain offhandedness in his reply.

The day before this interview, I had spent several hours talking to an elderly couple who were living in a very small apartment in another section of the Bronx. When I asked them how life was now, there had been a long pause, and then the wife had said, "Lonely." There had been a silence; there wasn't too much I could say to that. And then the husband had chimed in with a word, and it was the same word: "Lonely."

Raising the subject of East Tremont with Commissioner Moses, I asked him the most innocuous question I could think of: Wasn't it more difficult to build an expressway in the city rather than a parkway in the country? He waved his hand dismissively. "Oh, no, no, no," he said. "There are more people in the way—that's all. There's very little real hardship in the thing. There's a little discomfort, and even that is greatly exaggerated."

Then I asked him if he had ever been worried about losing to the people up there—of having to change his route to save their homes.

"Nah," he said, and I can still hear the scorn in his voice as he said it—scorn for those who had fought him, and scorn for me, who had thought it necessary to ask about them. "Nah, nobody could have stopped it." In fact, he said, the opposition hadn't really been much trouble at all. "[They] just stirred up the animals there. But I just stood pat, that's all." He looked at me very hard to make sure I understood, and, intending to return to the subject in more depth at some future date, I said that I did.

DURING those same months in which I was interviewing Robert Moses, however, I was also going through papers: the files of Governors Alfred E. Smith and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, of Fiorello LaGuardia and other mayors; and the private papers of reformers, urban planners, and politicians who had been involved with Moses in one way or another, years or decades before.

Some of the files had lain untouched for decades, since, at the end of a governorship or a mayoralty or a private career, they had been packed away. Some of the papers of Al Smith had been kept in envelopes, and occasionally when I opened an envelope and unfolded the pages within, they crumbled in my hand, so long had it been since they had been unfolded. And while much of what Robert Moses had been telling me not only was fascinating but was confirmed by the information in those files, on some points—including some crucial points—there were rather sharp discrepancies between his accounts and the written record, so it was necessary for me to start asking him to reconcile his account with that record.

One striking discrepancy concerned two curves in the Northern State Parkway, which Robert Moses had been building eastward out through Nassau and Suffolk Counties in 1929 and 1930, during Roosevelt's governorship. In two spots—Old Westbury, in Nassau County, and Dix Hills, in Suffolk County—the parkway swerved inexplicably south toward the middle of the island before, on the far, or eastern, side of those areas, it curved back and resumed its eastward course.

Moses, who during his entire career had eloquently and persuasively portrayed himself as uncompromising—as a public servant who was above politics and would never compromise with what he felt was right—had used the Northern State Parkway to demonstrate that point in his interviews with me. He had told me, quite eloquently, that its route was the one he had originally chosen, that he had refused to compromise over that route—a statement that, of course, meant that the two curves had always been planned.

In going through files, however, I had

TOKEN

In the bottom of my shoulder bag
I found a subway token from about eight tokens
back, that makes it long ago,
a monumental oldie. What's it made of?
Bronze-copper bevelled and a dull sterling inside glow.
The "NYC" insignia like a secret fraternity embellish.
Brings to mind! Lively morning stench,
hot steel rails, the crowds
I used to sink in.

I could get up and down subway steps, I wasn't
dying. I loved dirt and torn-up newspapers, I was
able to walk. I wrote, it was like a church, like a god-
less tabernacle was God. That was
young. Whirling past the Coney Island darkness,
into flared faces on the platform, the token
rides my hand in the crush.

The old New York system. I remember
a black guy in a baseball cap, two legs gone, coming
through aisles, on a platform on skate wheels,
dignified and with a beautiful
voice. People dropped quarters and tokens
in his basket. He wasn't sanctimonious or drugged on
crime, or we didn't know it.

A token of the incommensurate.
(Even if wrong) I wasn't dying then and could
afford to think in
big words.

—Jane Mayhall

come across maps showing the proposed parkway without those curves—maps on which the parkway, in a substantially different route from the one it actually followed, ran in a generally straight line through the beautiful hills in the northern part of Long Island. And in Roosevelt's papers I had also come across a series of letters and telegrams that had been sent to him during 1929, the first year of his governorship.

One letter was from Grenville Clark, a noted attorney, who was representing the Old Westbury robber barons in their fight to keep Moses' parkway, and the city masses the barons despised, away from their estates. It referred, in obscure terms, to an arrangement between Moses and the multimillionaire Otto Kahn, which, Clark wrote, on March 29, 1929, if "finally brought to light will not make a creditable chapter in the history of this State." Other letters and telegrams I came across, in various files, showed that Clark was not exaggerating. They revealed that the Northern State Parkway had originally been supposed to run through the middle of an eighteen-hole private golf course that Kahn had constructed for his pleasure on his Dix Hills estate. In 1926, the legislature was refusing to allocate funds to Moses for any purposes connected with the parkway, so that he didn't even have enough money for surveys. The letters showed that Kahn had offered to secretly donate ten thousand dollars to the Park Commission for surveys, provided that some of the surveys found a new route for the parkway—one that would not cross his estate at all. And they revealed that Moses had secretly accepted the money, had used it for surveys, and had indeed found a new route—one that avoided Kahn's estate. South of Kahn's estate lay the estates of other powerful robber barons, so the route was shifted south again—more than three miles south—so that it ran down the center of Long Island, through a group of small farms.

Clark delivered an ultimatum to Roosevelt, telling the Governor that if the parkway's route was not changed to avoid both estate areas, in Old Westbury as well as Dix Hills, the public would be informed of how a millionaire had given ten thousand dollars to keep his private golf course untouched and how Moses had accepted the money and used it to throw farmers off their land. Moses thereupon agreed to a "compromise," which was not really a compromise at all but a complete surrender, under which the parkway would make the two southward curves, so that it would avoid the estate areas, and under which Moses also agreed that instead of building parks along and at the end of the Northern State Parkway, as he had originally planned, there would not be a single park anywhere along that parkway, or anywhere in the section of the North Shore that the barons controlled, so that their Gold Coast would remain undefiled by the city masses. And, in return, the Kahn-Moses transaction was kept secret—and it had remained secret, when I came upon it, for almost forty years.

When the time came for my seventh interview with Robert Moses—on April 27, 1968—I knew I could no longer postpone asking him about the arrangement with Otto Kahn. And there were many other questions that my research had raised about which I had to ask him—hundreds of questions, really.

I got to ask him only one, however.

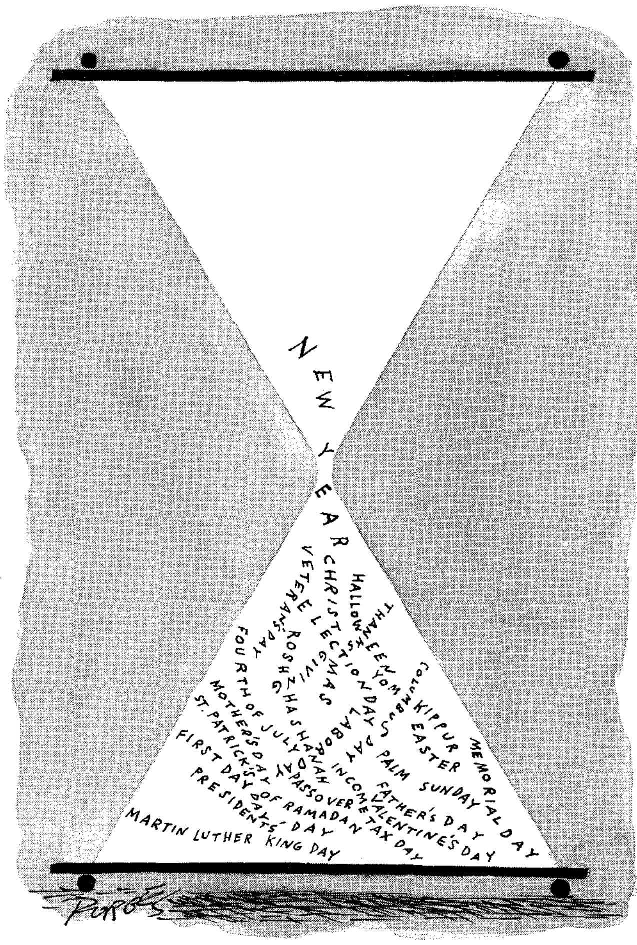
I worded my first question about Kahn and the Northern State Parkway as politely—and, indeed, as obliquely—as possible, but Robert Moses' mind worked very fast, and I was later to conclude that with my very first mention of Kahn's name he knew that I had seen the crucial letters and telegrams. I could see his eyes harden. There was not a word of verbal reaction; he simply changed the subject and, very shortly thereafter, said he would have to cut the interview short that day.

Every time, during the remaining five years I was working on "The Power Broker," that I tried to arrange another interview, his secretaries said he was busy, and I never talked to him again.

WHILE my interviews with Moses were over, however, my research was not. I decided to try to find the farmers through whose land the parkway had finally run, to see if they could cast any additional light on the subject.

Finding them was not easy. Though the huge estates of the great barons were all labelled by name on Moses' maps (famous names: not only Kahn but Whitney, Vanderbilt, Phipps, and Morgan, among others), the farms, being much smaller, appeared on the map as mere dots or slivers; there wouldn't have been room for names even if someone had wanted to put them there. And during the forty years since their land had been taken most of the farmers had died or moved away. When I did find them—to be more accurate, when *we* found them: my wife, Ina, the only researcher I had

"Ah, Mr. Bromley. Nice to put a face on a disease."



on "The Power Broker" (and the only researcher I have had on all my books), and I each tracked down several of the farmers or their children—I didn't learn anything new about the Kahn-Moses transaction. In fact, they had never heard of it; they believed that the parkway had come through their farms solely because of the reason that Moses' representatives had given them—that engineering considerations made the route the only one feasible.

I did, however, learn about *them.*

I will never forget talking to Helen Roth, the widow of one of those farmers, James J. Roth, and to her son, Jimmy. As I was asking Mrs. Roth and her son about the parkway's route, Jimmy started talking also about the parkway's effect—on their lives—and after a while his mother, in a very soft voice I can still hear today, chimed in.

When James and Helen Roth bought their farm—forty-nine acres in Dix Hills—in 1922, much of it had been covered with woods, and all of it had been rocky. It had had to be cleared, and since Roth's team of horses couldn't budge many of the stumps, he—and, many times, his wife—pulled beside their horses, hauling at the ropes, while their son, as soon as, at the age of five, he was old enough to do so, handled the team, sitting on one of the horses and kicking him forward. By 1927, however, the land was finally cleared, and despite their discovery that the soil on the southern fifteen acres of the farm would never be any good for planting, the remaining thirty-four acres were rich and fertile. Life was gruelling for all three members of the family: there was no money for a hired man. At harvest time, Roth, who had been up before dawn working in the fields, would load up one of his two wagons and drive to market while Helen and Jimmy loaded the other. Every minute mattered to a man trying to work thirty-four acres without a hired man, and so when Roth returned he would hurriedly unharness the team, hitch it to the loaded wagon, and drive to market while Helen and Jimmy reloaded the first wagon. But by 1927 the farm had finally begun to pay. "We felt pretty secure," Jimmy said. "We had a nice farm. In those days, a farm wasn't just real estate, like it is now. In those days, a farm was your living. It was your home. And we had a nice farm."

And then, in 1927, after Moses struck his deal with Otto Kahn, one of Moses' aides drove up to the Roths' farm one day and told them that the Long Island State Park Commission was condemning fourteen acres from the center of the farm for the Northern State Parkway.

Taking fourteen acres from the farm's center meant taking fourteen of the farm's only thirty-four fertile acres. And cutting the farm in half with a parkway meant that getting from one half of the farm to the other would require driving off the farm to the nearest road that crossed the parkway, thereby making it far more difficult to work the part of the farm that remained. There was, however, a solution that would not hurt the Roths nearly so much: moving the parkway four hundred feet south—less than a tenth of a mile. If the Long Island State Park Commission did that, the land taken would be taken from the barren part of the farm, and, since that land wasn't worked much anyway, the splitting of the farm by the parkway wouldn't matter nearly so much.

James Roth pleaded with Moses' representative to take that route. All he was asking, he said, was that the road be moved less than a tenth of a mile; that wouldn't matter to drivers using the road—and it would lessen the harm not only to his farm but to all the other farms involved. Moses refused even to consider the plea, saying that the route had been determined by engineering considerations that could not possibly be changed.

"My father was really rocked by this," recalled Jimmy Roth, who as a little boy had sat on a horse watching his father's and mother's backs bent into the ropes. "And I don't know that I blame him. I'll tell you—my father and mother worked very hard on that place, and made something out of it, and then someone just cut it in two." The fourteen acres were condemned; the condemnation award "never came to much," Mrs. Roth said. And since the farm now consisted of two separate, rather small pieces instead of a single big one, they couldn't even sell it.

Working the farm, moreover, became much harder. It took the Roths at least twenty-five minutes to get their team to the nearest road that crossed the parkway and then double back to plow the other side of the farm. Each round trip took about fifty minutes, and these were fifty-minute segments chopped out of the life of a man to whom every minute counted. "It was quite a ways," Mrs. Roth said, in her quiet voice. "It was quite a ways for a man who was working hard already."

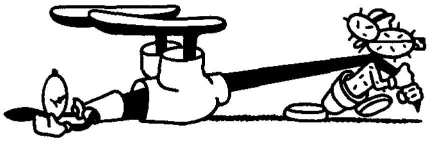
Many other farms—twenty-one in the Dix Hills area alone (I don't think I ever counted the ones in the Old Westbury area, but there seem to have been more than twenty-one there)—were similarly ruined by the Northern State Parkway. To those farmers, the day they heard that "the road was coming" would always be remembered as a day of tragedy. One consideration alone made the tragedy more bearable to them—their belief that it was necessary, that the route of the parkway had been determined by those ineluctable engineering considerations.

But I knew, from the telegrams and letters, that it hadn't been necessary at all. It would, in fact, have been easy to move the parkway. Besides, for men with power or the money to buy power, Robert Moses had already moved it. It was running across James Roth's farm only because Otto Kahn hadn't wanted it to run across his golf course, and could pay to make sure it wouldn't, and because the Whitneys and the Morgans had power that Moses had decided to accommodate rather than challenge. "For men of wealth and influence," I was to write, Moses "had moved it more than three miles south of its original location. But James Roth possessed neither money nor influence. And for James Roth, Robert Moses would not move the parkway south even one-tenth of a mile farther. For James Roth, Robert Moses would not move the parkway one foot."

I can't honestly say, particularly after so many years have passed, that it was during my conversations with the farmers and with the people of East Tremont that my concept of the kind of book I wanted to write changed. I don't really remember exactly when it changed. But these conversations with the Long Island farmers had brought home to me in a new way the fact that a change on a map—Robert Moses' pencil going one way instead of another, not because of engineering considerations but because of calculations in which the key factor was power—had had profound consequences on the lives of men and women like those farmers whose homes were just tiny dots on Moses' big maps. I had set out to write about political power by writing about one man, keeping the focus, within the context of his times, on him. I now came to believe that the focus should be widened, to show not just the life of the wielder of power but the lives on whom, and for whom, it was wielded; not to show those lives in the same detail, of course, but in sufficient detail to enable the reader to empathize with the consequences of power—the consequences of government, really—on the lives of its citizens, for good and for ill. To really show political power, you had to show the effect of power on the powerless, and show it fully enough so the reader could feel it.

At the time of my last interview, although I didn't know it then—and I'm not sure Robert Moses fully realized it, either, though the realization was starting to sink in—he was being removed from power, in a vicious struggle with Nelson Rockefeller, who had succeeded, on March 1, 1968, in merging the Triborough Authority into his newly formed Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Moses believed (as did others involved in the negotiations) that, in return for his support of the merger, Rockefeller had firmly promised him that he would retain all his old power over Triborough within the new agency, and that in addition he would be put in charge of projects he had long been planning, most notably the huge Sound Crossing, a six-mile-long bridge he wanted to build across Long Island Sound between Oyster Bay and Rye in Westchester County; the next (but not the final) link in the chain of bridges—the Triborough, the Whitestone, the Throgs Neck—joining Long Island with the mainland that he had planned decades before. But as the months passed, and the only position Moses was offered with the M.T.A. was a "consultantship," and as the bridge, despite repeated assurances by the Governor, remained unauthorized, I realized that Robert Moses' days of power were over, and to the complex mixture of my feelings about him was now added a wholly new one: pity. For, as one of his secretaries, Harold Blake, told me, "He had just as much energy as ever. And what was he going to do with it now?"



An architect who knew him well, Arnold Vollmer, said, "The idea of this great mind having nothing to do—that's the most awful thing." And his wife, Rebecca Vollmer, who also knew Moses well, said, "It's horrible. For him, that would be hell." I had gotten to know Robert Moses well enough to know that last statement was true.

During the next five years, as I continued to work on my book about him, he continued to fight and scheme to get power back, swallowing his pride to go hat in hand to Nelson Rockefeller, rallying his allies among the contractors and labor unions who were realizing that the city could not build big jobs without him. ("They want him to get tired and to go away and get lost," Peter Brennan, of the Building and Construction Trades Council, reported to me. "But I say, 'Forget it! This guy don't blow away!' ") Although he shrank in height, his physical vigor was still remarkable. (In 1969, a *News* reporter wrote, "He's a big man, not so much in height and weight as in presence, and even now, on the eve of his eighty-first birthday, he's got enough vitality and power to become the instant center of attention when he walks into a room. . . . Even now, it's easy to see why they called Robert Moses a giant.") But all his fighting and scheming was for nought, and when I heard from some of his assistants, still coöperating with me, about how the old man would pace the deck outside the Oak Beach house for hours, staring across at Fire Island, I would feel like crying, as sometimes I felt like crying about the people the old man had crushed when they stood in his way. He never got to build anything again.

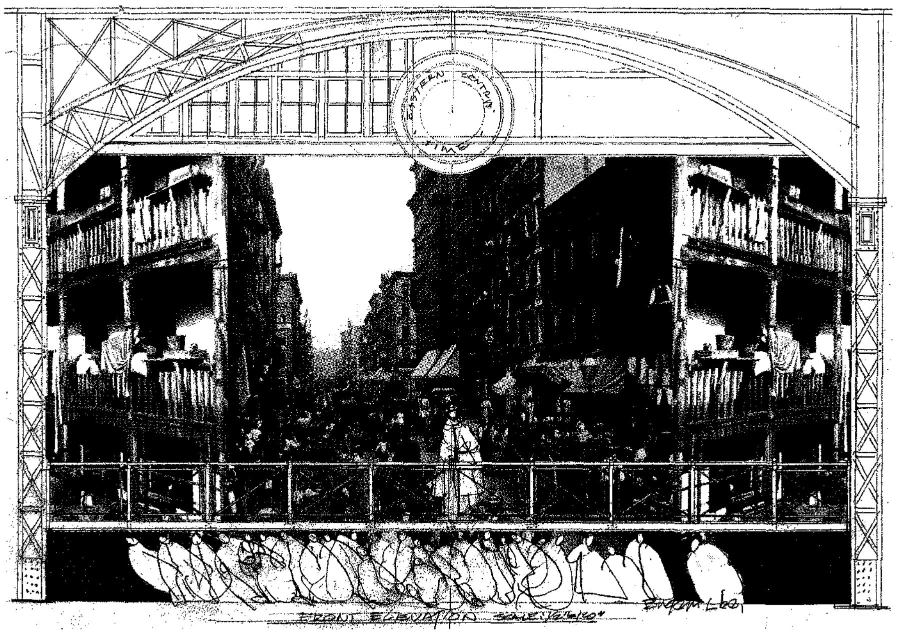
When my book, "The Power Broker," was published, in 1974, he issued a thirty-five-hundred-word statement attacking it—and me—written with all his acerbic brilliance of phrase. In one place, he said: "Charges of arrogance, contempt for the so-called democratic process, lack of faith in plain people, brutal uprooting and scattering of those in the way are as old as recorded history. In such periods, the left wingers, fanatical environmentalists and seasonal Walden Ponders have a field day." He never ceased denouncing me, in speeches and countless letters. He died on July 29, 1981, at the age of ninety-two. Although I wanted very much to attend his funeral, I felt that his family and friends would not want me to be there, so I didn't go. ◆

ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

SKELETON OF THE NEW

The story behind the scenes of "Ragtime."

BY JOHN LAHR



"AMERICA was meant to be everything," the nineteenth-century English novelist Harriet Martineau wrote. If that exhilarating sense of possibility had a touchstone, it was New York, and by the turn of the century the city was beginning to mythologize its importance. "No other city in the world is improving itself at the rate which New York is doing," the New York *Sun* boasted in 1901. "We have under way tunnels, bridges, reservoirs, public buildings, new driveways and new parks, the total cost of which is literally stupendous." The article continued, "Ten years hence New York will be transformed. Ours is a wonderful city to advance."

"Ragtime," a musical epic about three emblematic New York families (Wasp, black, and immigrant Jewish) caught in the slipstream of progress after 1900, opens in New York on January 18th, following successful runs in Toronto and Los Angeles. The show dramatizes that moment when the city was a collision of old and new energies: the entropy of nineteenth-century order and the anarchy of the new industrial momentum. The sound of ragtime, with its elegant formal harmonies and its impudent swagger, captures the apposite tempos at play in that transitional era. E. L. Doctorow, on whose novel the musical is based, told me that he sees the connection of the music to his themes this way: "The left hand, which is the steady beat, is the implacable march of history. The right hand, which is the syncopated melody, is the struggle of people to improvise and escape from history." But the theatrical key to translating Doctorow's heavily populated novel from the page to the stage is Pennsylvania Station—specifically, its magnificent steel-and-glass concourse, which was built between 1906 and 1910, and which survived fifty-three years. (The original building was demolished in 1963.) Although Penn Station gets only a passing mention in the novel, the

Eugene Lee's design for the Lower East Side (above), and the stage set inspired by the steel-and-glass concourse of Penn Station. Photograph by Chris Callis.

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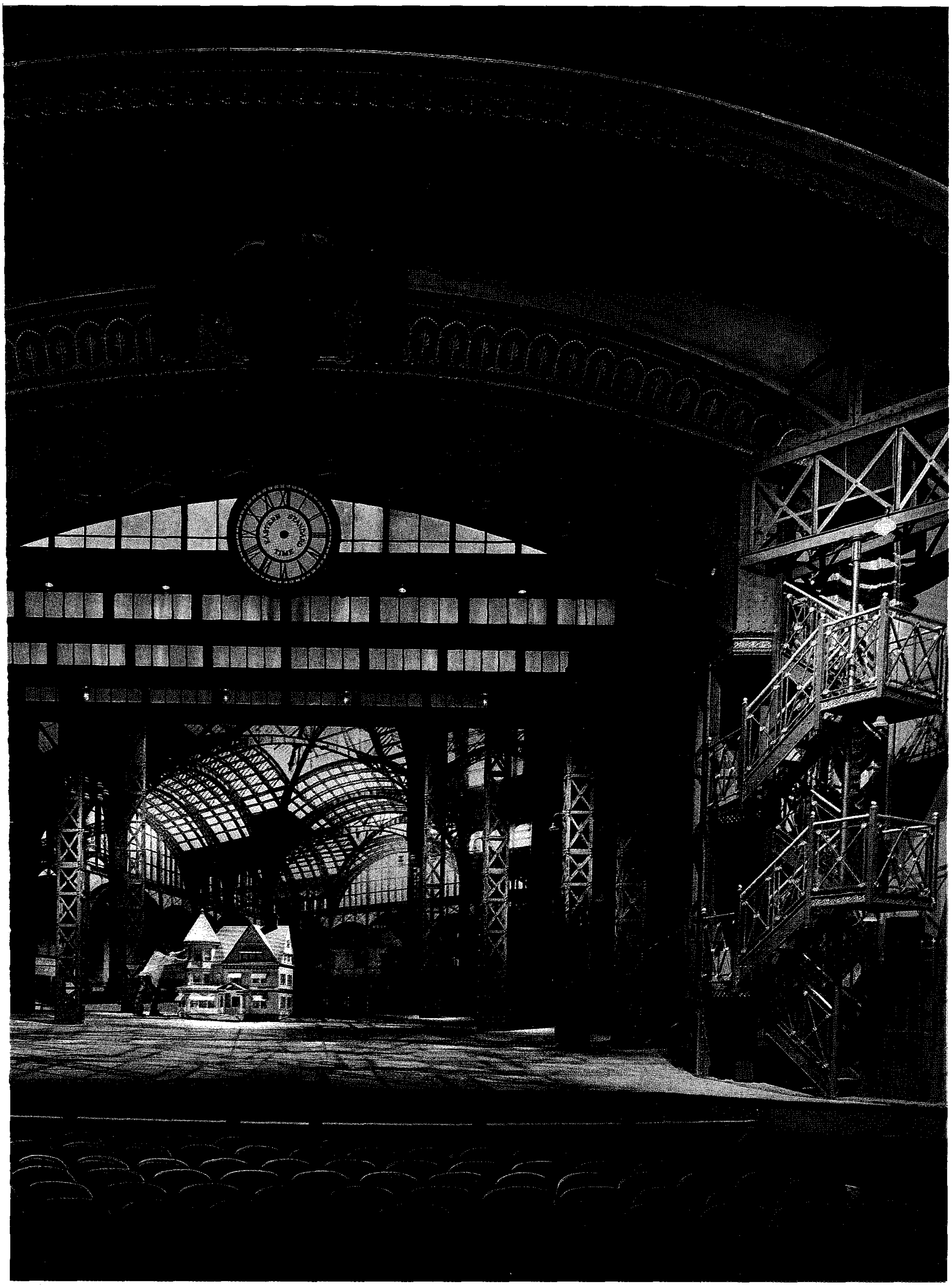
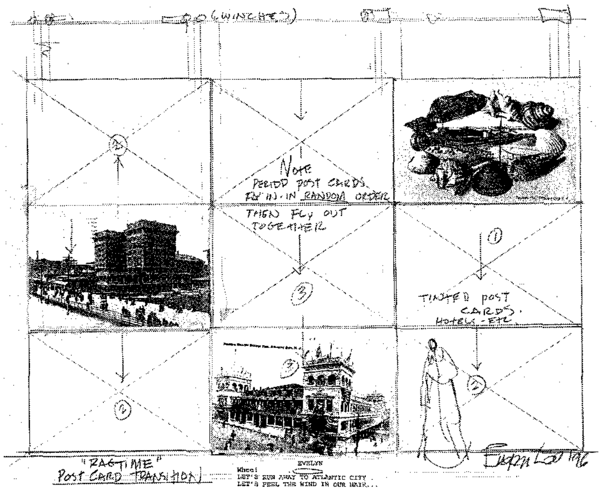

EASTERN STANDARD TIME

set designer Eugene Lee recognized that all the dynamic forces of the era—steel, steam, machines, space, speed, and the journeying citizen—came together at this intersection. At once an architectural masterpiece and a testament to the new momentum, Penn Station condenses into a single bold stage picture Doctorow's "indefatigable civilization."

"I needed some kind of frame, some kind of open playing field to have this thing played on," Lee told me. A few years ago, he was asked by the show's producer, Garth Drabinsky, to study American Impressionist painters for inspiration. During his research, he stumbled upon a book about the painter George Bellows, a chronicler of the urban landscape who was fascinated by the twenty-five-million-dollar hole that was being dug in New York's Tenderloin to bring trains under the Hudson River. "I started reading," Lee recalls. "It said, 'The Pennsylvania Railroad terminal building promised to be a monumental gateway.' And I just stopped at the word 'gateway.' " Lee underlined the word and scrawled beneath it "Proscenium!"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THEN FLY OUT TOGETHER
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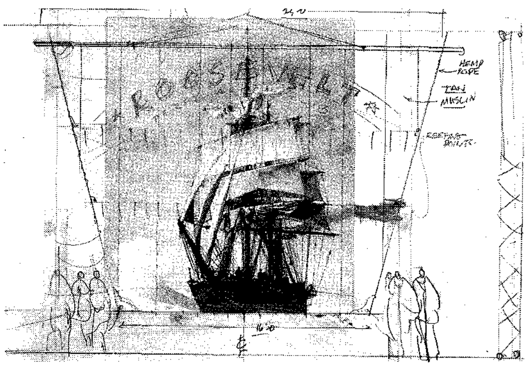
① ② ③
Eugene Lee '96
"RAGTIME" POST CARD TRANSITION
EVELYN
Whee!
LET'S RUN AWAY TO ATLANTIC CITY .
LET'S FEEL THE WIND IN OUR HAIR...



The station provided not only the perfect framework for the show but also the theatrical elements from which an appropriate cityscape could be constructed. "There are scenes in Harlem, under the El, and in a New Rochelle train station, and they all have the same ironwork design ideas that were in Penn Station," Lee explains. He envisioned movable steel columns that could sculpt different architectural spaces. Even before the curtain goes up on "Ragtime," the audience is aware of elegant cast-iron stairways on either side of the proscenium, with railings of burnished bronze, and of a latticed truss above the stage, from the middle of which hangs a stylized version of the concourse clock. Here the clock is without hands, broadcasting the show's intention to be a metaphor of the times and to play with time itself. The clock, which is typical of Lee's desire to create "reverberations in the mind," rules not only train schedules and work schedules but also the internal life of the American citizen in his restless pursuit of self-realization. The station embodies the notion of the future—a poignant and punishing dream that the musical's characters, both famous and fictional, act out.

Pennsylvania Station's monumentality allowed Lee—as the director, Frank Galati, puts it—"to create space, not stuff." It also allowed him to let that space tell part of the American story. Space is a crucial part of the country's sense of abundance and its optimism: it emboldens the individual to exercise his freedom—to reach higher and farther. Watching "Ragtime," the paying customer finds the soaring stage space lifting his heart just as Penn Station's vaulted magnificence once lifted the heart of the hurrying traveller. ("One feels important going to the toilet here," a visitor wrote in 1962.) "Every human being in the place has an immense volume of air allotted to him," Galati says of the symbolic overtones of the station. "No one is crowded in or crammed in. It has the majesty of a cathedral, but it does not aspire to the divine; it exalts the human."

The vaulted ceilings in the actual station were a hundred and fifty feet high, and the dramatic high-tech concourse had been left free of masonry to show the streamlined columns and glass. Lee refers to these columns as "the skeleton of the new." And they were. The provocation of the concourse is the candor of its freedom. "It was a completely revolutionary way of seeing where we dwell, and where we intersect with each other," Galati says of the concourse. "It's not marble, it's not stone, it's not brick, it's not wood. Everything is revealed." He goes on, "This is what we're all about. We're about industry. We're about progress. We're about movement. We're about transportation. We're about freedom. We're about being liberated." The effect of the stark steel columns is one of peeling back the carapace of the old to expose the essence of the new. "To me, this is resonant with other peelings away that occur at the beginning of the twentieth century," Galati says. "Freud is tearing off the skin. Stravinsky is tearing off the skin. The façade of nineteenth-century conventions is cracking open."

But, in its boldness, the steel structure also contains the immanence of violence. "It really is an enormous leap, aesthetically, to decide that a steel column is beautiful," Doctorow observes. "Something has been changed very quickly, very suddenly." The ruthlessness is acted out onstage when a steel gangway is lowered between the columns, and J. P. Morgan strides in, singing about success; at the same time, the wooden tenements of Orchard Street are projected on an upstage scrim, and the immigrants, who have been drawn to America by the dream of wealth that Morgan personifies, are crunched together beneath him. Through the language of the stage architecture, Lee and Galati have found a way to convey the

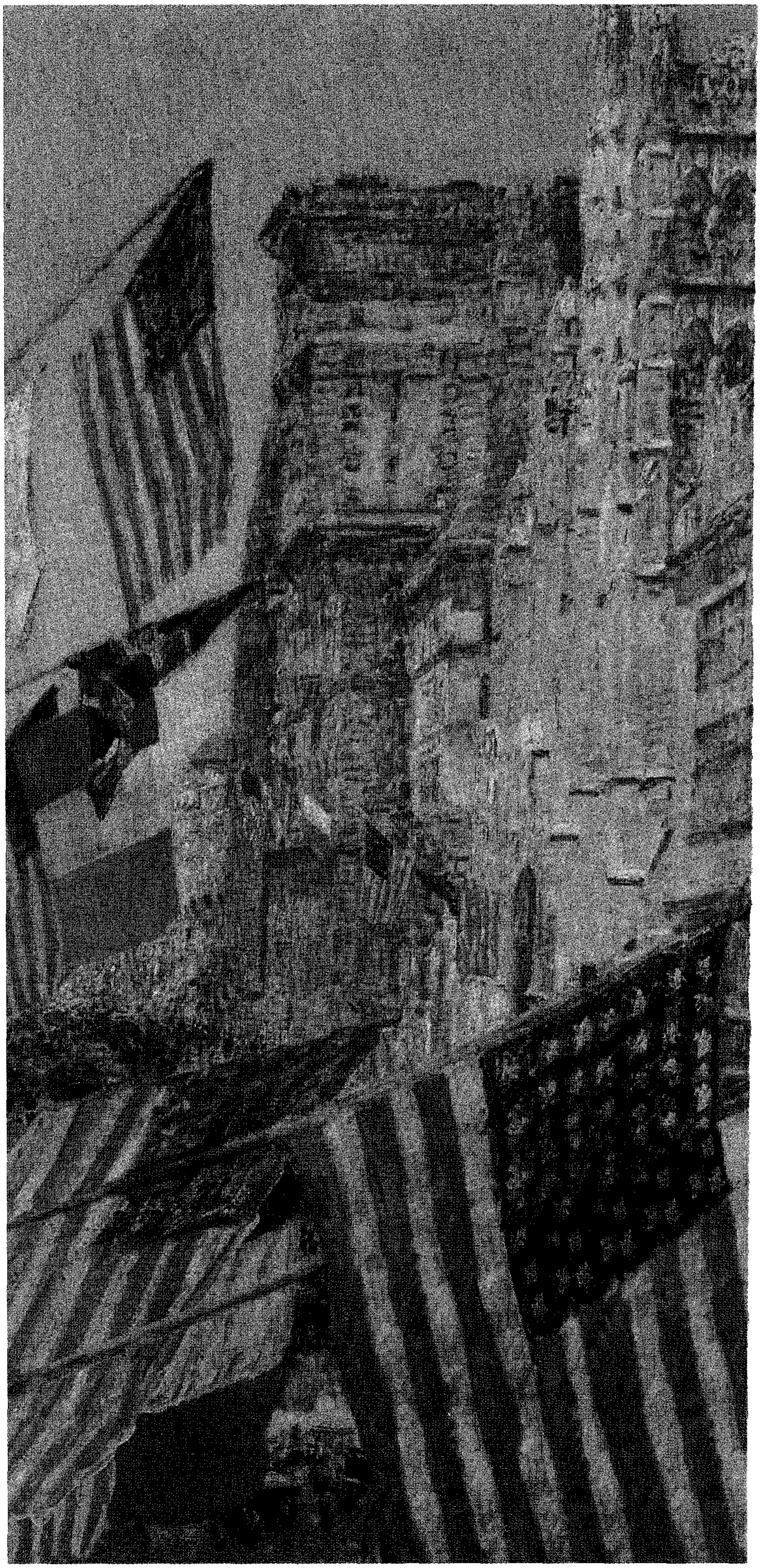
Lee's sketches for scene changes (above), and the designer, with his dog, Henry, in his Providence, Rhode Island, studio. The Ford Center, where "Ragtime" will open, is a contemporary pleasure dome reconstructed in the spirit of the show it houses.

OPPOSITE: CONSTANCE BROWN

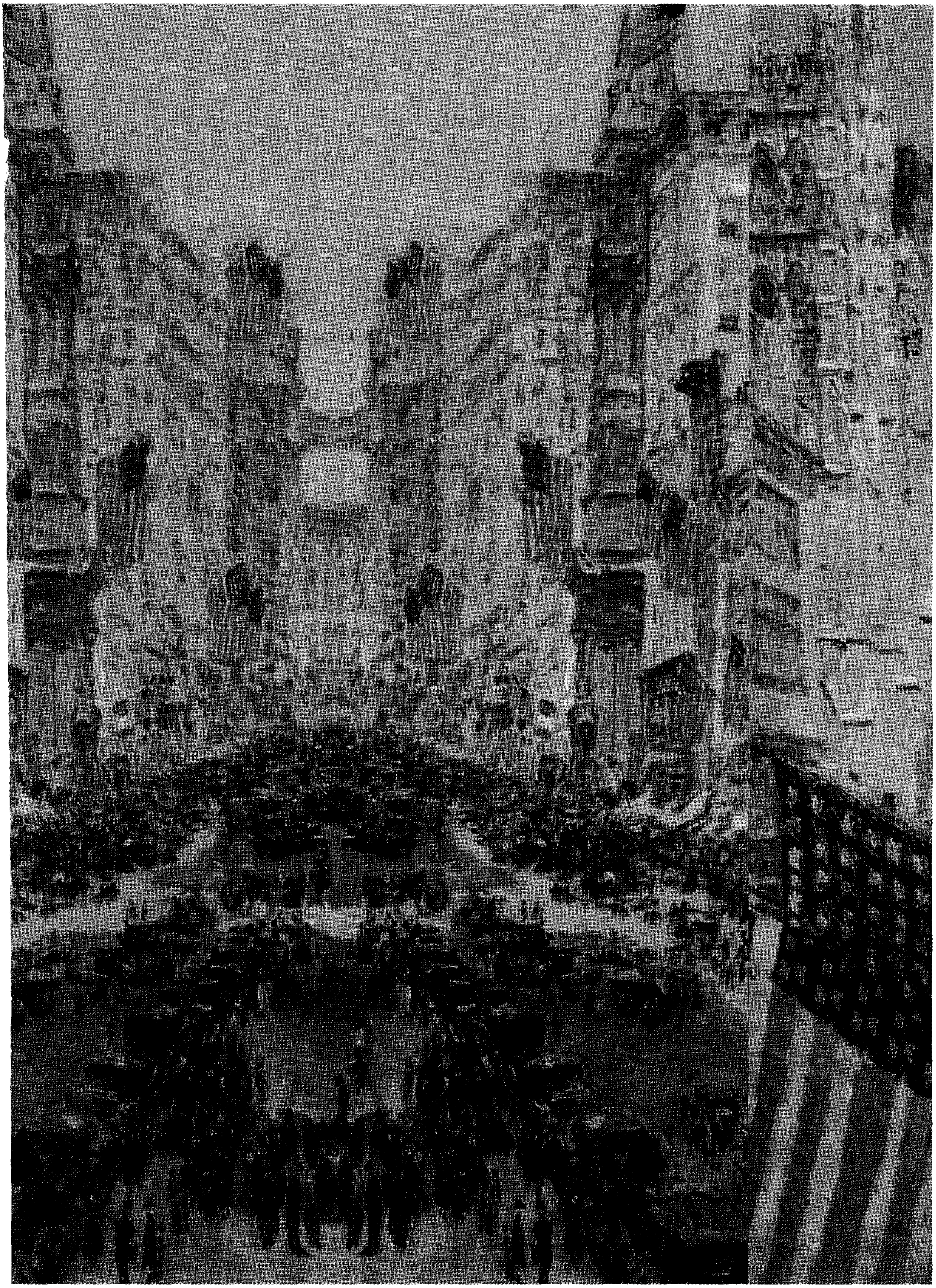
relationship between entrepreneurial capitalism and alienated labor in one stunning stage picture.

Although "Ragtime" is always looking to the future, the musical, like the novel, is really a conversation with the past. Doctorow, musing on his title, commented that writing was really a process of "going down to the rag bin of your mind and pulling up whatever you can find and somehow stitching it together, making a whole something out of little bits and pieces." The designers of the Ford Center, which was built specifically for "Ragtime" and amalgamated the old Apollo Theatre (1920) and the Lyric Theatre (1903), are playing the same game. Unlike Disney's renovation of the New Amsterdam Theatre, across the street, the Ford Center is not a refurbishment but something new constructed out of components of the old: a contemporary pleasure dome created in the style and in the spirit of the show it houses. The theatre's large Adam-style proscenium arch, with its bas-relief design, has been preserved and expanded from the original Apollo; the lobby's dome and its design motifs are taken from the Lyric; and much of its lighting consists of exposed carbon-filament bulbs, which were used at the turn of the century. The result is a theatre that is part of the set: the opulent gallimaufry of its antique architectural details combined with the latest in high-tech lighting and sound engineering evokes a kind of touching wonder at the new and the lavishly wrought—the same wonder that characterized the spirit behind the Gilded Age's prosperity and playfulness.

"It may succeed all too well," Lee says of the theatre's reconstruction. "I think people who don't understand the theatre will look at it and say, 'Wow, they really did a great job restoring this.' The fact is that it has been totally built. The lobby is a fiction. The murals up there on the walls are a fiction. It's a wonderful kind of made-up thing." And it is in this netherworld between fact and fiction, past and present, that the collaborators of "Ragtime" have created what just may be the last great musical of the century. ♦



Lee's second-act curtain, inspired by Childe Hassam's paintings of Fifth Avenue.



FICTION

THE BURNING OF SMYRNA

Why can't the city be found on a map today?

BY JEFFREY EUGENIDES

On September 6, 1922, General Hajianestis, Commander-in-Chief of the Greek forces in Asia Minor, awoke with the conviction that his legs were made of glass. Afraid to get out of bed, he sent the barber away, forgoing his morning shave. In the afternoon, he declined to go ashore for his usual lemon ice on the Smyrna waterfront. Instead, he lay on his back, still but alert, ordering his aides—who came and went with dispatches from the front—not to slam the door or stomp their feet. This was one of the General's more lucid days. When the Turkish Army had attacked Afyon, two weeks earlier, Hajianestis believed that he had died, and that the ripples of light reflecting on his cabin walls were the pyrotechnics of Heaven.

At two o'clock, the General's second-in-command tiptoed into his cabin to say, in a whisper, "Sir, I am awaiting your orders for a counterattack."

"Do you hear how they squeak?"

"Sir?"

"My legs. My thin, vitreous legs."

"Sir, I am aware the General is having trouble with his legs, but I submit, with all due respect"—a little louder than a whisper now—"that this is not a time to concentrate on such issues."

"You think this is some kind of joke, don't you, Lieutenant? But if your legs were made of glass, you'd understand. I can't go into shore. That's exactly what the Turks are banking on! To have me stand up and shatter my legs."

"These are the latest reports, General." His second-in-command held a sheet of paper over Hajianestis's face. "The Turkish cavalry has been sighted fifty miles west of Smyrna," he read. "The refugee population is now a hundred and eighty thousand. Since yesterday, that is an increase of thirty thousand."

Outside, the famous Aegean harbor was full of ships. Merchant vessels were tied up to a long quay alongside barges and wooden caïques. Farther out, the Allied warships lay at anchor. The sight of them, for the Greek and Armenian citizens of Smyrna (and the thousands and thousands of Greek refugees), was reassuring, and whenever a rumor circulated—yesterday an Armenian newspaper had claimed that the Allies, eager to make amends for their support of the Greek invasion, were planning to hand the city to the victorious Turks—the citizens looked out at the French destroyers and British battleships, still on hand to protect European commercial interests in Smyrna, and their fears were calmed.

Dr. Nishan Philobosian had set off for the harbor that afternoon, kissing his wife, Toukhie, and his daughters, Rose and Anita, goodbye, slapping his sons, Karekin and Stepan, on the back. He locked the front door behind him, testing it with his shoulder, and started down Suyane Street, past the closed shops and shuttered windows of the Armenian Quarter; they'd been under self-imprisonment for the last five days now. He stopped outside Berberian's bakery, and wondered if Charles Berberian had taken his family out of the city or if they were hiding upstairs. The bakery door had a sign that said "Open soon" and a portrait of Mustafa Kemal, the Turkish leader, looking resolute in an Astrakhan cap and a fur collar. Dr. Philobosian moved on, silently rehearsing the arguments against displaying such a thing. The European powers would never let the Turks enter the city, he felt. But if they did the warships in the harbor would stop the Turks from looting. And finally—for his own family, at least—there was always the letter that he was about to retrieve from his office.

From one end of the harbor to the other, Greek soldiers, exhausted, cadaverous, unclean, limped toward the embarkation point at Chesme, southwest of the city, awaiting evacuation. Their tattered uniforms were black with soot from the villages they'd burned in retreat. Only a week before, the waterfront's elegant, open-air cafés had been filled with naval officers and diplomats; now the whole waterfront was a holding pen. The first refugees had arrived with carpets and armchairs, radios, Victrolas, lamp stands, dressers, spreading them out on the quay, under the open sky. The more recent refugees turned up with only a sack or suitcase. Amid this, porters darted everywhere, loading boats with tobacco, figs, cinnamon, frankincense, silk, and mohair. The warehouses were being emptied before the Turks arrived.

Dr. Philobosian spotted a refugee picking through chicken bones and potato peels in a heap of garbage. It was a young man in a dirty suit. But when the refugee looked up, the doctor saw only a blank for a face; he was indistinguishable from any of the other refugees swarming the quay. He noticed a cut on the man's hand, and the pallor of malnutrition. "Are you sick?" he asked.

"I haven't eaten for three days," the man said.

The doctor sighed. "Come with me."

He led the refugee down back streets to his office. He ushered him inside and brought gauze, antiseptic, and tape from a medical cabinet, and examined the hand.

The cut was on the man's thumb, where the nail was missing.

"How did this happen?"

"A Turk. Greek soldiers burned down his village and killed his children. So he shot me."

Dr. Philobosian said nothing, cleaning the wound.

"I can't pay you," the refugee said.

Dr. Philobosian held up his hand. A

coin gleamed in it. "I'll pay you. Get something to eat."

"Thank you. God bless you. I won't forget this."

"Try not to drink the water where people have been relieving themselves. Boil things, if you can. God willing, some ships may come soon."

The refugee nodded. "You're Armenian, Doctor?"

"Yes."

"And you're not leaving?"

"This is my home."

Dr. Philobosian led the refugee out. It's hopeless, he thought. He'll be dead in a week. If not typhus, something else. But it wasn't his concern. Reaching inside a typewriter, he extracted a thick wad of money from beneath the ribbon. He rummaged through drawers until he found, inside his medical diploma, a faded typewritten letter: "This letter certifies that Dr. Nishan Philobosian, M.D., did, on April 3, 1919, treat Mustafa Kemal for diverticulitis. Dr. Philobosian is respectfully recommended by Kemal to the esteem, confidence, and protection of all persons to whom he may present this letter." He folded up the letter and tucked it into his pocket.

BY then the refugee was buying bread at a bakery on the quay. And now, in the light reflected off the water, his identity begins to fill itself in; within the multitudes, a person appears; beneath the dirt, a face. For the first time in four days, Eleutherios Tatakis, my grandfather, was smiling. In his previous outings, he'd brought back only a single rotten peach and six olives, which he'd encouraged his sister, Desdemona, to swallow, pits and all, to fill herself up. Now, hidden beneath the filthy suit he'd once worn courting, he carried a warm, sesame-seeded *chureki*. He was feeling encouraged by another development, too. Just that morning, word had spread that Greece was sending a fleet of ships to evacuate refugees. Eleutherios looked out at the Aegean. Having lived on a mountain for twenty years, he'd never seen the sea before. Somewhere over the vast water was America. He smelled the sea air, the warm bread, and the antiseptic from his bandaged thumb, and then he saw her—Desdemona, sitting on the suitcase where he'd left her—and he felt even happier.

Eleutherios couldn't pinpoint the moment he'd begun to have thoughts about his sister. At first, he'd just been curious to see what a real woman's breasts looked like. It didn't matter that they were his sister's. He peeked over his foreign newspapers to see them, or, later, more devious, peered through rips he made in the newsprint. Next, he started to wonder what they would feel like. "How can you read moving the paper like that?" Desdemona asked. "Back and forth, back and forth."

"The article keeps jumping."

"But what is that? English? You can't read English."

"I can read a little. It's just like French."

"Oh, you can't read French, either."

Soon he found himself picturing his sister after the lights went out. She invaded his fantasies, but Eleutherios resisted. He went down to the city instead, in search of naked women he wasn't related to.

But since they had fled their village, he'd stopped resisting. Because of the look in Desdemona's eyes, because their parents were dead and their village destroyed, because no one in Smyrna knew who they were, and because of the way Desdemona appeared now, sitting on a suitcase.

And Desdemona—what did she feel? Fear foremost, and worry, punctuated by unprecedented explosions of joy. She had never rested her head in a man's lap before. She'd never slept like spoons, encircled by a man's arms; she'd never experienced a man getting hard against her spine while trying to talk as though nothing were happening. "Only fifty more miles," Eleutherios had said one night on the arduous journey to Smyrna. "And when we get to Smyrna, we'll get a boat to Athens"—his voice tight, funny-sounding, a few tones higher than normal—"and from Athens we'll get a boat to America. Sound good? Good. I think that's good."

WHAT am I doing? Desdemona thought. He's my brother. She looked at the other refugees on the quay, expecting to see them shaking their fingers, saying, "Shame on you!" But they only showed her lifeless faces, empty eyes. Nobody knew. Nobody cared. Then she heard her brother's excited voice. "Behold. Manna from Heaven."

Desdemona glanced up at him. Her mouth filled with saliva as Eleutherios broke a *chureki* in two and gave her half. But her face remained sad. "I don't see any boats coming," she said.

"They're coming. Don't worry. Eat." Eleutherios sat on the suitcase beside her. Their shoulders touched and Desdemona moved away.

"What is it?"

"Nothing."

"Every time I sit down, you move away." He looked at Desdemona, puzzled, but his expression softened, and he put his arm around her. She stiffened.

"Eleutherios, could you go find us more food?"

And so, dutifully, Eleutherios again set out to see what he could find. He entered the city streets, peering into private courtyards, looking for fruit on the trees. He came down the Rue de France, turned a corner, and found himself at the Sporting Club, gazing through ironwork gates at grass tennis courts, where two foreign consuls weren't letting the emergency keep them from their game. In the fading light, they moved back and forth, swatting at the ball while a dark-skinned boy at the side of the court held a tray of gin-and-tonics. Eleutherios kept walking. He came to a square with a fountain and he washed his face. A breeze came up, bringing the scent of jasmine all the way from Bournabat. And while Eleutherios stops to breathe it in, I'd like to take this opportunity to resurrect—for purely elegiac reasons—that city which disappeared, once and for all, in 1922.

Smyrna endures today in a few *manes* and a stanza from "The Wasteland":

Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocketful of currants
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,
Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.

Everything you need to know about Smyrna is contained in that. The merchant is rich, and so was Smyrna. His proposal is seductive, and so was Smyrna, the most cosmopolitan city in the Near East. Among its reputed founders were, first, the Amazons and, second, Tantalus himself. Homer was born there, and Aristotle Onassis. In Smyrna, opera and *politakia*, violin and *zourna*, piano and *daouli*, East and West, blended as subtly as did the rose petals and honey in the local pastries. Eleutherios never forgot his time there.

Eleutherios started walking again and ended up in front of the Smyrna *casin*. Potted palms flanked a grand entrance, but the doors stood wide open. He stepped inside, listened, and followed a red carpet to the second floor, and into a gaming room, where he found the craps table unoccupied, and nobody at the roulette wheel. In the far corner, however, a group of men were playing cards. They glanced up when Eleutherios entered, but then returned to their game, ignoring his dirty clothes. Then he realized that the gamblers in the *casin* were all refugees like him. Each had wandered through the open door in hopes of winning enough money to buy passage out of Smyrna. Eleutherios approached the table. A cardplayer looked up and asked, "You in?"

"I'm in."

He didn't understand the rules. He'd never played poker before, and for the first half hour he lost again and again. Eventually, though, Eleutherios began to understand the difference between five-card draw and seven-card stud, he began to value the kings that he had thrown away, and, gradually, the balance of payments around the table began to shift. "Three of these," Eleutherios would say, showing three aces, and the men began grumbling, but watched Eleutherios's dealing more closely now, mistaking his clumsiness for a cardsharp's sleight of hand. He began to enjoy himself, and after winning a big pot cried, "Ouzo all around!" But when nothing happened, he looked up to see how truly deserted the *casin* was, and the sight brought home to him the high stakes they were playing for. Life. They were playing for their lives, and now, as he examined his fellow-players and saw perspiration beading brows, and smelled their sour breath, Eleutherios Tatakis, showing far more restraint than he would in any future poker game, stood up and said, "I'm folding."

They nearly killed him. Eleutherios's pockets bulged with winnings he'd taken from these men, and they insisted that he couldn't leave without giving them a chance to win it back. He bent over to scratch his leg, saying, "I can go out any time I want," until one man grabbed him by his soiled lapels, and Eleutherios added, "And I don't want to yet." He sat down, and began losing all the money he had in his pockets. At which point, greatly incensed, he pleaded, "Can I leave now?" The men said, "Sure, leave," as they dealt the next hand. Outside the *casin*, Eleutherios bent down to collect the money he'd stashed in his ripe-smelling socks.

Back at the quay, he found Desdemona. "Look what I found," he said, flashing his wad of cash. "Somebody must have dropped it. Now we can get a ship."

Desdemona screamed and hugged him. She kissed him right on the lips. Then she pulled back, blushing.

By September 7, 1922, every Greek in Smyrna, including Eleutherios, was wearing a fez in order to pass as a Turk. The last Greek soldiers were being evacuated at Chesme. The Turkish Army was thirty-five miles away—and no ships had arrived yet from Athens to evacuate the refugees.

Eleutherios, newly monied and befezzed, made his way through the maroon-capped crowd at the quay. He crossed tram tracks and headed uphill. He turned right, left, until he disappeared into a steamship office.

Inside, a clerk was bending over passenger lists. Eleutherios took out his winnings and said, "Two seats to Athens!"

The head remained down. "Deck or cabin?"

"Deck."

"Fifteen hundred drachmas."

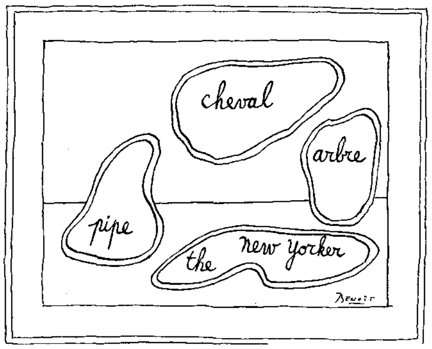
"No, not cabin," Eleutherios said, smiling. "Deck will be fine."

"That is deck."

"Fifteen hundred? I don't have fifteen hundred. It was five hundred yesterday."

"That was yesterday."

On September 8, 1922, General Hajianestis sat up in bed, rubbed his right leg and then his left, rapped his knuckles against them, and stood up. He went on deck, walking with great dignity, much as he would later proceed to his death in Athens when he was executed for losing the war.



On the quay, the Greek Civil Governor, Aristedes Sterghiades, boarded a launch to take him to the General's ship. The crowd hooted and jeered. Hajianestis took the scene in calmly from the deck. The launch reached the ship and Sterghiades, ashen-faced, climbed aboard.

General Hajianestis then gave his first strategic order of the past few weeks: "Up anchors. Reverse engines. Full steam ahead."

On shore, Eleutherios and Desdemona watched the Greek fleet leaving. The huge crowd surged toward the water, shouting. And then it fell silent. Smyrna had no government now; there was nothing between this crowd and the advancing Turks.

(And did I mention how in the summer the streets of Smyrna were bordered with baskets of rose petals? And how everyone in the city could speak French, Italian, Greek, Turkish, English, and Dutch? And did I tell you about the famous figs, brought in by camel caravan and dumped onto the ground, huge piles of pulpy fruit lying in the dirt, with dirty women steeping them in salt water and children squatting to defecate behind the clusters? Did I mention how everybody wore masks on Mardi Gras and had elaborate dinners on the decks of frigates? I mention these things because all this happened in that city that was no place exactly, that was part of no country, because it was all countries, and because now, if you go there, you see oil refineries and a bus station smelling of gasoline, and a sign erected by the Turkish National Tourist Board which will tell you only that the city, now called Izmir, was won back from the Greeks in 1922, but which won't mention anything before.)

Wednesday, September 13, 1922. Eleutherios and Desdemona had been in the city for seven nights when the smell of jasmine turned to kerosene. Barricades had been erected around the Armenian Quarter, and the Turkish troops who had taken over the city had appeared at the quay, blocking its exits. But the wind was blowing in the wrong direction. Around midnight, however, it shifted. It began blowing in a westerly direction, away from the Turkish heights and toward the harbor.

In the blackness, torches gathered. Three members of a *chette* stood in a tailor shop. The torches illuminated bolts of cloth stacked on shelves, and suits hanging on a rack. Then, as the light grew, the tailor became visible. He was sitting at his sewing machine, his right shoe still on the foot treadle. The light grew brighter still, to reveal his face—the gaping eye sockets, the beard torn out in bloody patches.

All over the Armenian Quarter fires bloomed. At his house on Suyane Street, Dr. Philobosian hung a wet carpet over the balcony; then he hurried back inside the dark house and closed the shutters. But the blaze penetrated the room, lighting it up in stripes.

Across the street, Mrs. Bidzikian sang the first three notes of the "Queen of the Night" aria from "The Magic Flute." The music sounded so strange amid the other noises—of doors crashing in, people screaming, girls crying out—that all the Philobosian family looked up. Then her voice hit a note none of them had ever heard before, a note close to an animal's cry, and they all realized that Mrs. Bidzikian hadn't been singing an aria at all.

"Rose, get me my bag. She's hurt," Dr. Philobosian said.

"Nishan, no. If they see you come out, they'll know we're hiding," his wife said.

"No one will see."

The flames of the burning city first registered to Desdemona as lights on the ships' hulls. Orange brushstrokes flickered above the waterline of the U.S.S. Litchfield and the French steamer Pierre Loti. The water brightened, as though a school of phosphorescent fish had entered the harbor. Then the sirens went off.

It wasn't one fire but many. There were twenty orange dots on the hill above. As soon as one fire was extinguished, another erupted somewhere else. They started in hay carts and trash bins; they followed kerosene trails down the center of streets; they turned corners; they entered bashed-in doorways. One fire penetrated Berberian's bakery, making quick work of the bread racks and pastry carts, burning through the door leading to the living quarters, climbing the front staircase where, halfway up, it met Charles Berberian, who tried to smother it with a blanket, before it raced up the stairs and into the house. The heat pulled down wallpaper in sheets; and this was happening not only in this apartment but in ten or fifteen others, then twenty or twenty-five, each house setting fire to its neighbor until entire blocks were burning. The smell of things burning that aren't meant to burn wafted across the city: shoe polish, rat poison, toothpaste, piano strings, hernia trusses, baby cribs, Indian clubs. And hair and skin. On the quay, Eleutherios and Desdemona stood up along with everyone else, with people too stunned to react or still half asleep, thinking that they were dreaming. And then, suddenly, all the fires on the hillside formed one great wall of fire stretching across the city, and—it was inevitable—started moving down toward them.

(And now I remember something else: My father, in a maroon robe and a pair of bedroom slippers, bending over to light a fire on Christmas morning. Only once a year did the need to dispose of a mountain of wrapping paper overrule Desdemona's objections to using our green-tiled hearth. Desdemona inevitably grabbed her cane. At the hearth, my father would pull a long, gold-tipped match from a hexagonal box. But Desdemona would already be turning, and heading for the safety of the kitchen, where the oven was electric. My father would say, "Your *yia yia* doesn't like fires," striking the match, holding it to paper covered with elves and Santas as flames lept up, and we ignorant American children went crazy throwing paper, boxes, and ribbons into the blaze.)

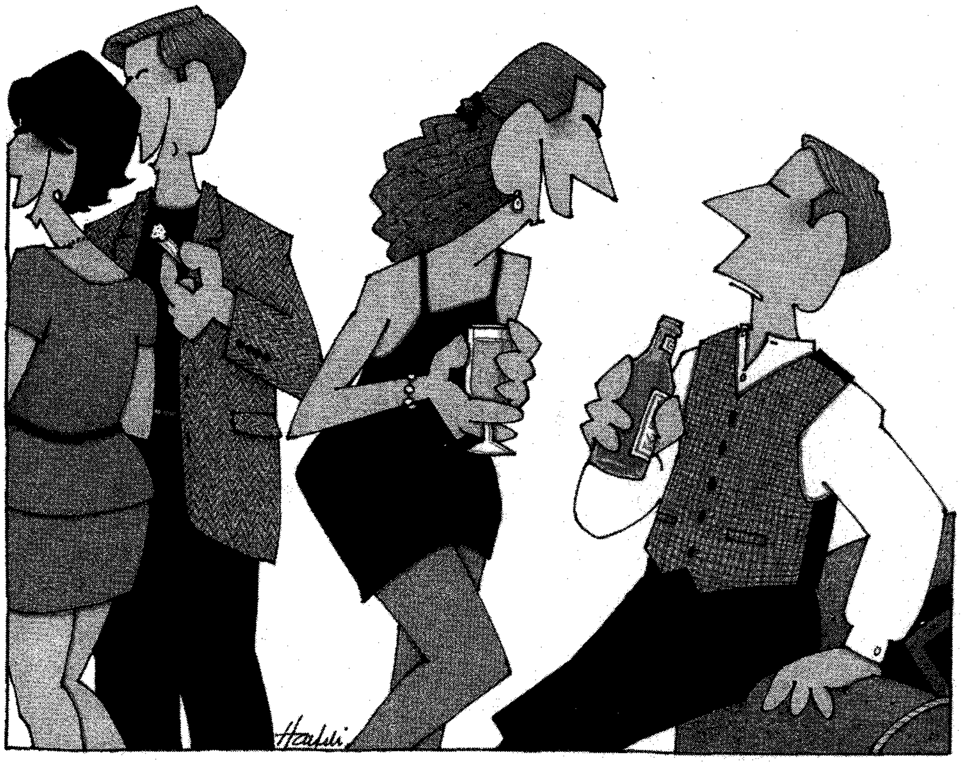
The heat preceded the fire. Figs heaped along the quay, not loaded in time, began to bake, bubbling and oozing juice. The sweetness mixed with the smell of smoke. Desdemona and Eleutherios stood close to the water. There was no escape. Turkish soldiers remained at the barricades. People prayed, raising their arms; others pleaded to ships in the harbor. Eleutherios removed Desdemona's kerchief, dipped it in the water, and spread it over her face. It dried in less than a minute.

"We're going to die, Eleutherios."

"No, we're not. You're going to marry me."

"We should never have left. We should have stayed in Dermidas."

As the fire approached, the doors of the French consulate opened. A marine garrison formed two lines stretching



"Teri tells me you're ostensibly straight."

• •

HEAVEN
PC VEY

"Apparently, it has something to do with el Niño."

• •

across the quay to the harbor. The Tricolor descended. From the consulate's door people emerged, men in cream-colored suits and women in straw hats, walking arm in arm to a waiting launch. Over the marines' crossed rifles, Eleutherios saw fresh powder on the women's faces. One woman tripped, breaking her heel, and was consoled by her husband. After the launch had motored away, an official turned to the crowd.

"French citizens only will be evacuated. We will begin processing visas immediately."

The fire bore down on the crowd at the quay. People inched back from the heat.

"Yiannis and Victoria were first cousins, weren't they?" Eleutherios asked, sensing his opportunity. "And they got married. And what about Yiorgos, who married Melia? She was his niece. What's the difference?"

"It's not right," Desdemona said.

Eleutherios put his lips to his sister's ear. "You promised you'd find me a nice Greek girl. Well. You're it."

A man jumped into the water; nearby, a woman was giving birth as her husband shielded her with his coat. "*Kaymaste! Kaymaste!*" people were shouting—"We're burning! We're burning!" Desdemona pointed at the fire, at everything. "It's too late, Eleutherios. It doesn't matter now."

"But if we lived? You'd marry me then?"

A nod. That was all. And Eleutherios was gone, running toward the flames.

It didn't occur to Dr. Philobosian, as he returned to his house, that the twisted body he stepped over in the street belonged to his youngest son. He noticed only that his front door was open. In the foyer, he stopped to listen. There was silence. He climbed the stairs. All the lamps were on now, and the living room was bright. Toukhie was sitting on the sofa, waiting for him. Her head had fallen backward as though in hilarity, the angle opening the wound so that a section of windpipe gleamed. Stepan sat slumped at the dining table, his right hand, which held the letter of protection, nailed down with a steak knife. Dr. Philobosian took a step and slipped, then noticed a trail of blood leading down the hallway and into the bedroom, where he found his two daughters. They were both naked, lying on their backs. Their breasts had been cut off.

The line moved slowly, and Eleutherios had time to go over his vocabulary.

"Name?"

"Eleutherios Tatakis."

"Place of birth?"

"Paris."

The official looked up. "Passport."

"Everything was destroyed in the fire! I lost all my papers!" Eleutherios puckered his lips and expelled air, as he'd seen Frenchmen do. "Look at what I'm wearing. I lost all my good suits."

The official smiled wryly and stamped the papers. "Pass."

"I have my wife with me."

"I suppose she was born in Paris, too."

"Of course."

"Her name?"

"Desdemona."

"Desdemona Tatakis?"

"That's right. Same as mine."

But when he returned with the visas, Desdemona wasn't alone. A man sat beside her on the suitcase. "He tried to throw himself in the water. I caught him just in time," she said. The man, dazed, bloody, kept repeating something in Armenian, of which Eleutherios understood a little. "They couldn't read. The soldiers couldn't read *my* letter," the man said, looking at Eleutherios, who recognized his face.

"You again?" the French official said, when Eleutherios returned with the Armenian.

"My cousin," said Eleutherios, in execrable French. The man stamped a visa and handed it to him.

A motor launch took them out to the ship. Eleutherios kept hold of Dr. Philobosian. In the water, bodies floated past. Some were alive, calling out. A searchlight revealed a boy halfway up the anchor chain of a battleship. Sailors poured oil over him and he slipped back into the water.

On the deck of the Jean Bart, the three new French citizens looked back at the burning city, ablaze from end to end. The fire would continue for the next three days, the flames visible for fifty miles. At sea, sailors would mistake the rising smoke for a gigantic mountain range. In the country they were heading for, America, the burning of Smyrna would make the front pages for a day or two, before being bumped off by the Halls-Mills murder case—the body of Halls, a Protestant minister, had been found in the bedroom of Miss Mills, an alluring choir member—and the opening of the World Series.

It was the custom in those days for passengers leaving for America to bring balls of yarn on deck. Relatives on the pier held the loose ends. My grandparents, embarking on their second voyage, from Athens to America, held no yarn themselves, but as the ship blew its horn and moved away from the dock a few hundred strings stretched across the water. People shouted farewells, waved furiously, held up babies. Propellers churned, handkerchiefs fluttered, and, up on deck, the balls of yarn began to spin. Red, blue, yellow, green, white, they unwound toward the pier, slowly at first, one revolution every ten seconds, then faster and faster as the boat picked up speed. Passengers held the yarn as long as possible, maintaining the connection to the faces disappearing on shore. But finally, one by one, the balls ran out. The strings of yarn flew free, rising on the breeze.

From two separate locations on the deck, my grandparents watched the airy blanket float away. For the first day at sea, they didn't speak to each other. They came up on deck at the appointed mealtimes and stood in separate lines. After eating, Eleutherios joined the men smoking at the rail while Desdemona hunched on deck with the women and children, staying out of the wind. "You have someone meeting you?" the women asked. "A fiancé?"

"No. Just my cousin in Detroit."

"All by yourself?" the men asked Eleutherios.

"That's right. Free and easy."

The voyage was supposed to take fourteen days. They had their plan all worked out. On the second day at sea, after dinner, Eleutherios made a tour of the ship. He picked his way among the bodies sprawled across the steerage deck. Desdemona was standing alone at the chain separating steerage from third class. As Eleutherios passed, he smiled and nodded. She nodded coldly and looked back out to sea.

On the third day, Eleutherios took another after-dinner stroll. He walked forward, crossed to port, and headed aft. He smiled at Desdemona and nodded again. This time, Desdemona smiled back. Rejoining his fellow-smokers, Eleutherios inquired if any of them might happen to know the name of that young woman travelling alone. On the fourth day out, Eleutherios stopped and introduced himself.

"So far the weather's good."

"I hope it stays that way."

"You're travelling alone?"

"Yes."

"I am, too. Where are you going to in America?"

"Detroit."

"What a coincidence! I'm going to Detroit, too."

They stood chatting for another few minutes. Then Desdemona excused herself and went down below.

Rumors of the budding romance spread quickly through the ship. "They're both travelling alone," people said. "And they both have relatives in Detroit."

"I don't think they're right for each other."

"Why not?"

"He's of a higher class than she is. It'll never work."

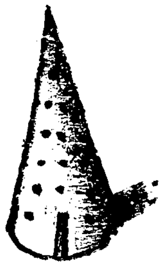
"He seems to like her, though."

"He's on a boat in the middle of the ocean! What else does he have to do?"

On the fifth day, Eleutherios and Desdemona took a stroll on deck together. On the sixth, he presented his arm and she took it.

"I introduced them!" one man boasted. City girls sniffed, "She wears her hair in braids. She looks like a peasant."

My grandfather, on the whole, came in for better treatment from his fellow-passengers. He was said to have been a silk merchant from Smyrna who'd lost his fortune in the fire; a son of King Constantine by a French mistress; a spy for the Kaiser during the Great War. Eleutherios never discouraged the speculation. He seized the opportunity of transatlantic travel to reinvent himself. He wrapped a ratty blanket over his shoulders like an opera cape. Aware that whatever happened now would become the truth, that whatever he seemed to be he would become—an American, in other words—he waited for Desdemona to come up on deck.



My grandparents enjoyed their simulated courtship. They made up past histories for themselves. "So," Eleutherios would ask, "do you have any siblings?"

"I had a brother," Desdemona replied wistfully. "He ran off with a Turkish girl. My father disowned him."

"That's very strict. I think love breaks all taboos. Don't you?"

Desdemona was standoffish at first. She withdrew her arm whenever he made an off-color joke. She told him that her mother had warned her about men like him. They passed the voyage playing out this imaginary flirtation and, little by little, they began to believe it. They fabricated memories and improvised fate.

Travelling to America made it easier. Sailing across the ocean among perfect strangers conveyed an anonymity in which my grandparents could recreate themselves. The driving spirit was self-transformation. Staring out to sea, tobacco farmers imagined themselves as race-car drivers, silk dyers as Wall Street tycoons, millinery girls as fan-dancers in the Ziegfeld Follies. Gray ocean stretched in all directions. Europe and Asia Minor were dead behind them. Ahead lay America and a new life.

On the eighth day at sea, Eleutherios Tatakis, grandly, on one knee, and in full view of six hundred and sixty-three steerage passengers, proposed to Desdemona while she sat on a docking cleat. My grandmother registered complex emotions: surprise; initial delight; second thoughts; prudent near-refusal; and then, to the applause already starting up, dizzy acceptance.

The ceremony took place on deck. In lieu of a wedding dress, Desdemona wore a borrowed silk shawl over her head. The captain loaned Eleutherios a racy necktie he'd picked up in Marseilles, bearing a hand-painted nude with sequin nipples. ("Keep your suit coat buttoned and nobody'll notice.") For *stephana*, my grandparents were crowned with rope. Hip to hip, arms interwoven to hold hands, Desdemona and Eleutherios circumambulated the captain, once, twice, and then again, spinning the cocoon of their life together. We Greeks get married in circles in order to impress upon ourselves the essential matrimonial facts: that to be happy you have to find variety in repetition; that to go forward you have to come back to where you began.

Or, in my grandparents' case, the circling worked like this: As they paced around the deck the first time, Eleutherios and Desdemona were still brother and sister. The second time, they were bride and bridegroom. And the third they were husband and wife. ♦

BOOKS

SHADOWS AND FOG

The photographer who awoke America to modernism.

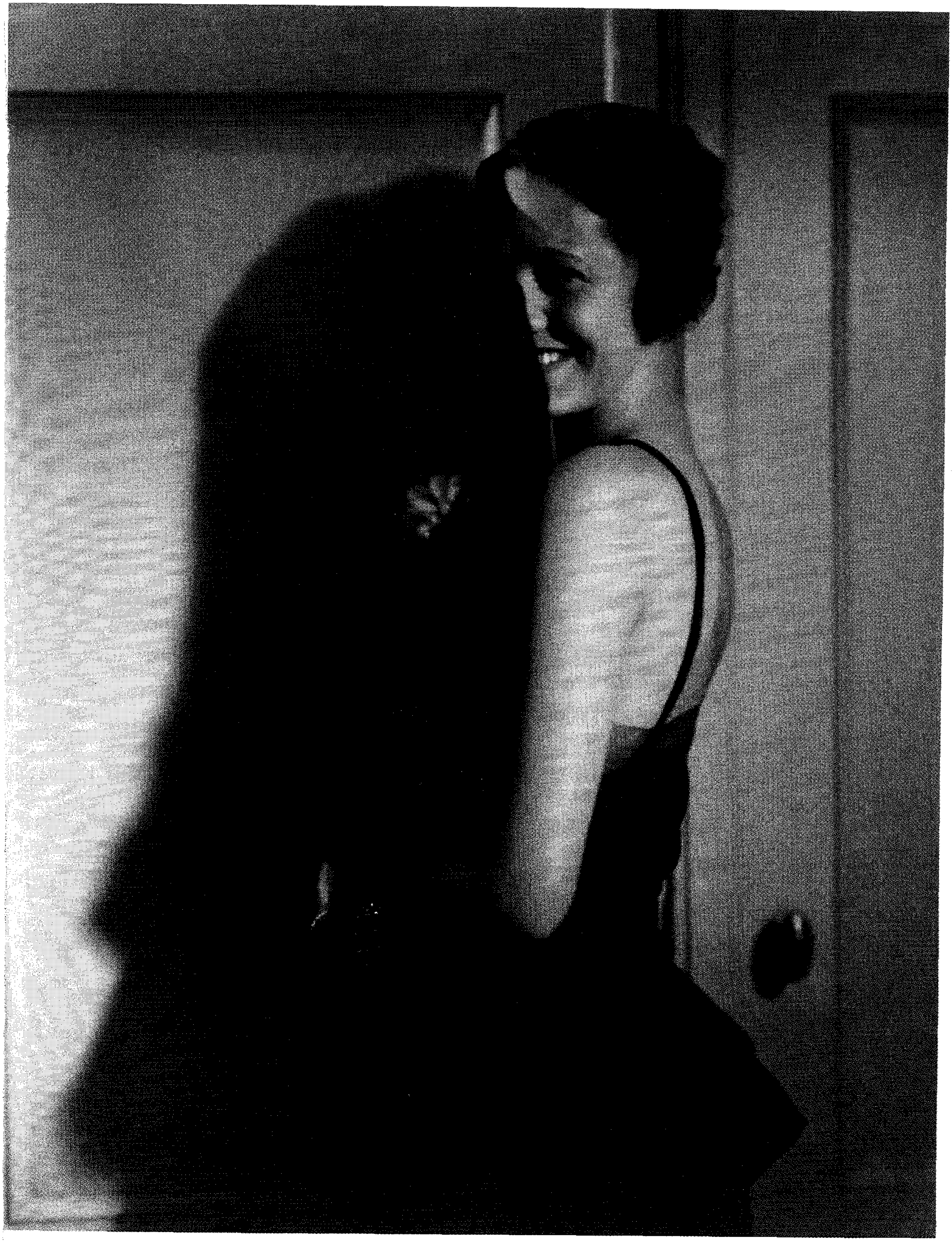
BY ANTHONY LANE

IT began with pigs. In 1894, at the age of fifteen, Edward Steichen—or Eduard, as he was christened and still called himself in those days—went to work for the American Fine Art Company of Milwaukee. Within two years, thanks to his skill as a draftsman, he had risen from unpaid janitor to designer of lithographic prints. Until then, the company had modelled its poster designs on old woodblocks, but Steichen, whose ambitions had hitherto been confined to painting, had a better idea. According to Penelope Niven, the author of "Steichen: A Biography" (Clarkson Potter; $45), the young man had recently acquired his first camera; and thus, in Niven's moving words, "he took sharp, clear pictures of pigs, which were so appreciated by his company's clients in the pork-production industry that they demanded that all future advertising lithographs be sketched from Steichen's actual photographs."

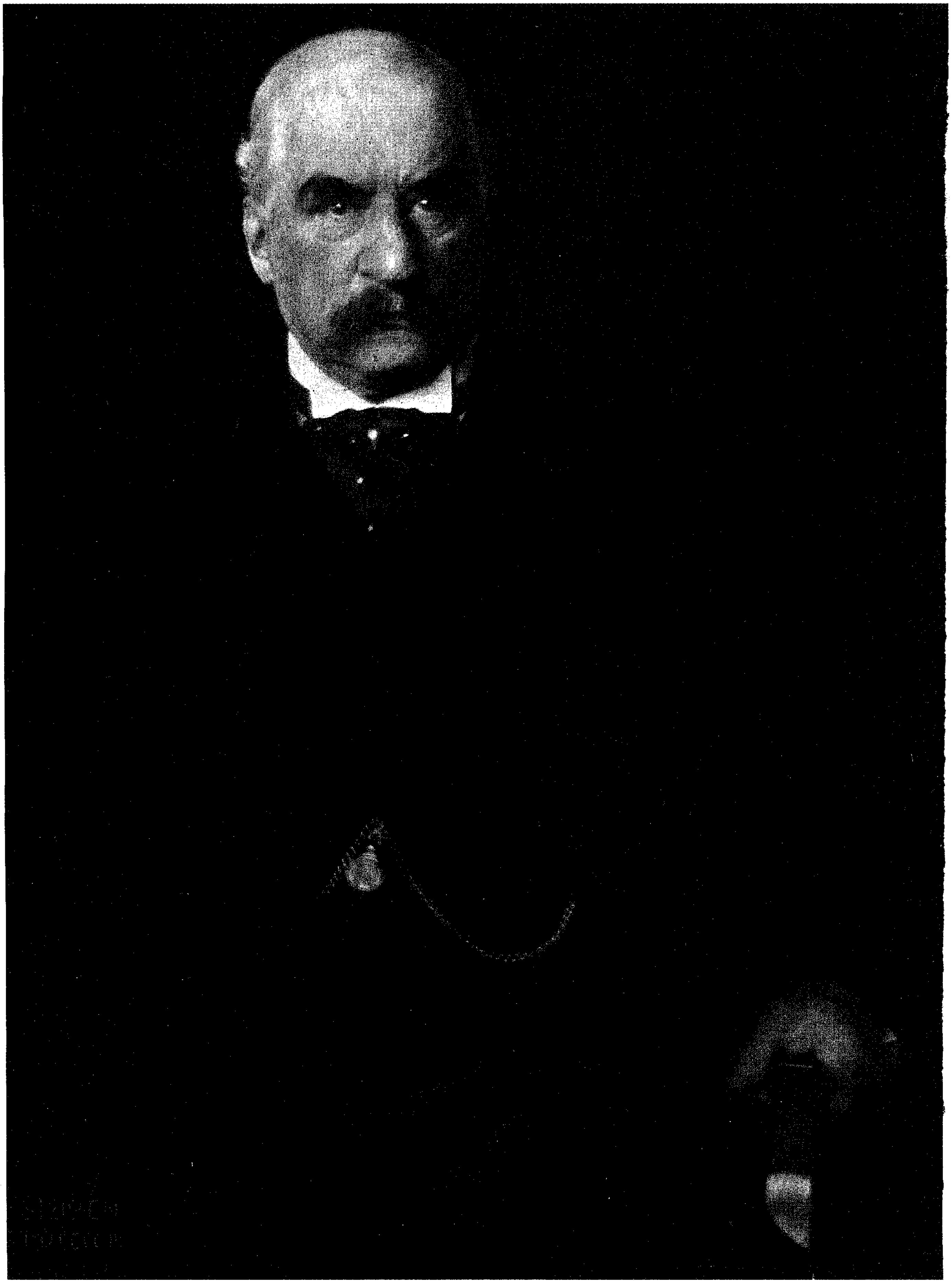
This was good business for Steichen and bad news for swine. A sharp, clear pig would turn the mind of even the noblest animal lover to helpless thoughts of sausage, whereas a pig that was shrewd enough to stay out of Steichen's way for a couple of years might have had a chance. By 1897, the photographer had embarked, or stumbled, upon the visual manner for which he remains best known—the mysterious climate that gripped his images as one century died and another came to life. They offer a permanent premonition of winter; even the interior portraits suffer their own particular solstice, as the creeping invasion of shadow appears not so much to stripe and hatch the central figures as to suck them in. Under this bewitching furze of darkness, even the stoutest hog would consist of little more than a dim snout and a curling suggestion of tail.

Steichen's most celebrated picture from this period—from any period—is that of the Flatiron Building, taken in 1905. Reproduced the following year for the journal *Camera Work* in tones of deep verdigris, it holds its place among the crucial representations of New York, thanks to a magnificent visual bigotry: impatient of the simple need to capture a view, Steichen chooses to imprison Broadway in the gloom of his imaginings—an oddly thrilling gloom, it must be said, with barely a trace of the morbid. The middle section of the frame is caged by leafless trees, and, though the only wetness we actually see is the reflective slick of the roadway, the air above the carriages feels damp and gauzy with rain, of the invisible kind that plasters hair to skin, and it's hard to dispel the eerie sensation of a world that is poised to drown. By any standard, this is an astonishing photograph for a young man to have taken—closer to the ruminations of Edith Wharton, say, than to the high spirits and frantic ambitions that one associates with Edward Steichen. No other photographer so determinedly reminds our eyes, as it were, of the stillness of still photography; between the stiff-spined archness that threatened the Victorian portrait and the hasty, freeze-dried moments of modern reportage, only Steichen had the skill, and the wit, to redefine the photograph as a kind of miniature monument, a repository of pensive peace.

He himself, on the other hand, lived and thrived as a professional jitterbug to the age of ninety-three. Between the world wars, for instance, he was in hectic demand as a society photographer, and yet war saw him divert his art without hesitation to the even higher demands of his country. Steichen was as fervent a patriot as you could hope to find in twentieth-century America; so it comes as no surprise to learn that he was born in Luxembourg in 1879. The following year, his father, the useless and occasionally violent Jean-Pierre, travelled to America in search of a better life, and failed signally to find it. When Jean-Pierre's letters stopped, Edward's mother, Marie, who was in every respect more capable, wrapped up her belongings, including her baby, and set off in search of her husband. "Chicago, where is this?" she asked, and followed directions. However well trodden the history of the mass European migration to the United States, it is always invigorating to discover yet one more heroic display of initiative and pluck, and Penelope Niven's long book is at its most brisk and entertaining in the early chapters, as she details the almost comical confidence of Marie Steichen. In 1889, the family moved from Hancock, Michigan, to



Steichen's "Self-Portrait with Sister (Lillian)," 1900 (opposite), and his portrait of Gertrude Lawrence, 1928. Steichen set himself apart from his contemporaries by shading, tinting, and painting his photographs. "Faking has set in," he declared.



J. P. Morgan, 1903. Steichen deliberately urged him to adopt an uncomfortable pose and caught him at the instant of irritation.

Milwaukee, which had practically doubled its population in a decade. By 1890, forty-seven per cent of its citizens were foreign-born, and most of them drank beer. When Niven writes a sentence such as "The Schlitz Brewing Company built spacious Schlitz Park, boasting its own theater, fountains, and menagerie, as well as outdoor opera performances in the summer," it's impossible not to be stirred by the sound of brassy civic ideals and, at the same time, by the alarming thought that Milwaukee was essentially Marie Steichen writ large.

Powered by his mother's industrious high hopes and, for some reason, unimpeded by Oedipal longings, Edward hit the ground at full speed. Before you know it, he is quitting Milwaukee and heading for New York, there to be met by a glorious sight: a six-story warehouse plastered with the advertisement that he himself had designed for Cascarets laxatives. "I decided then and there that New York must be the art center of the world," he wrote later, having clearly seen, in this unlikely portent, a sign that his career would run and run. Pausing only to make the acquaintance of Alfred Stieglitz—his mentor, fellow-genius, friend, and sometime opponent, and the only person in this book who makes our hero look like a sluggard—Steichen in 1900 sails to Europe, where he finds his true path as an artist, and where Penelope Niven, by no coincidence, loses her way as a writer. "Nearby cabarets pulsed with music, liberated men and women mingled freely, and the air could be wondrously alive with the romance and magic of Paris—or heavy with decadence and distraction."

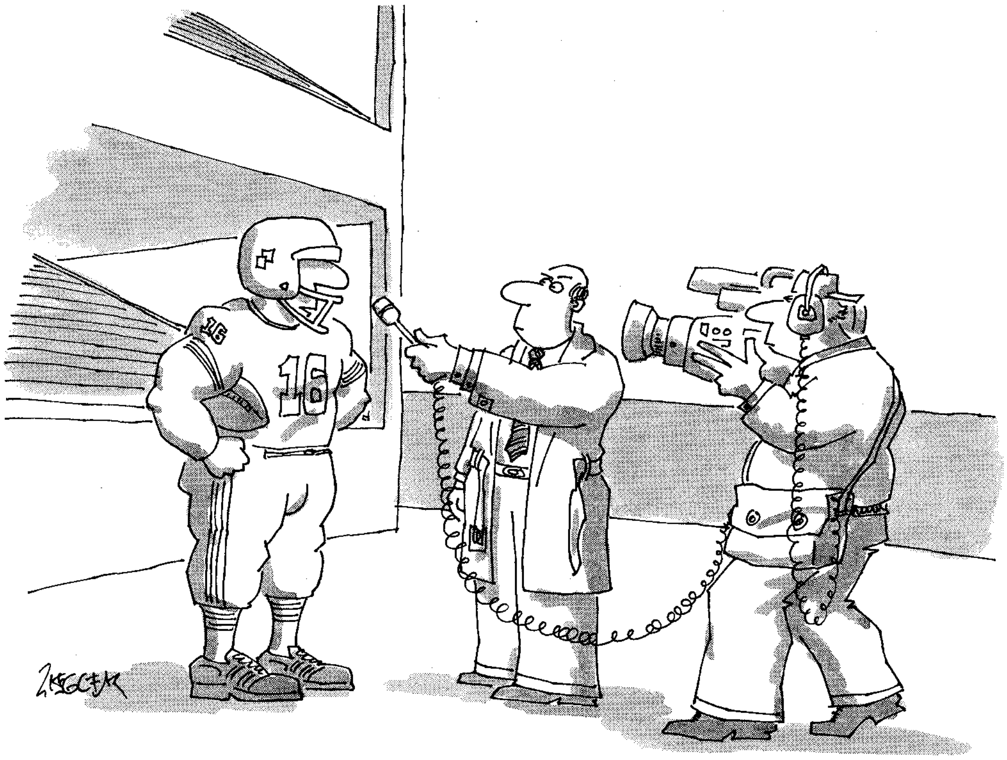
To be fair, there is no tolerable way to write about this period. I would suggest that publishers impose a moratorium on any mention of Parisian cultural life in the first quarter of the century were it not for the annoying fact that Edward Steichen, unlike those compatriots who merely thirsted for Bohemia Lite, did prosper and educate himself in this treacherous community. That he hung out with Picasso, Matisse, Rodin, and Brancusi is not surprising; what matters is that his appraisal of their work was so acute and so respectful that they entrusted him with the task of selecting and hanging it in America. 291, the gallery on Fifth Avenue that Steichen and Stieglitz founded, in 1905, showed Rodin's pale and carnal drawings in 1908, and three years later, according to Niven, "Steichen oversaw in Paris all the arrangements for Pablo Picasso's first exhibition in the United States, arguably his first major one-man show anywhere." Niven's claim that Steichen—as much as Stieglitz, who traditionally gets the credit—was responsible for waking America up to modernism is a compelling one, and if you want to know how Steichen himself profited from the transaction, you need only look at the stern and sumptuous pictures that he took of Rodin and his work. The sculpture of Balzac is forceful enough in the flesh, or in the stone, but Steichen's photograph makes it more brooding still, adopting a low angle that heightens the figure's bullish thrust against a drapery of dusk.

You could argue that Steichen lagged a generation behind the modernists he so admired; that his canon of low-lit portraits, far from looking forward, peers back to Sargent and Whistler, offering nothing new. But scrutinize his shot of J. P. Morgan, and you find none of Sargent's flattering languor; Steichen went at Morgan with an unblinking toughness to match his subject. At the three-minute sitting, he deliberately urged Morgan to adopt an uncomfortable pose and then trapped him in the instant of irritation. The hand that clutches the arm of the chair is that of a man who has a good mind to get up and leave. (Morgan, needless to say, enjoyed the close combat, and immediately gave Steichen five hundred dollars in cash.) Even one of Steichen's earliest photographs, "Self-Portrait, Milwaukee, 1898," cuts through its own haze with a diffident wit: an awkward Steichen discomposes himself at the right of the frame, stooping slightly, as if trying to fit the picture. He fails beautifully, losing one leg and cropping his own crown as you would slice off the top of a boiled egg. You can barely make out an expression on his face, although the shape of it—at once broad and acute, like Baudelaire's—is plain to see, and the hair falls in the lick of a leading man. The only glimmer shines from a polished shoe. Strangest of all, and enjoying pride of place, is a little empty picture frame hanging high on the wall behind Steichen. It's a gag, of sorts, but it adds a stamp of severity: Is this palely loitering youth suggesting that his image will end up there, like a family memento, or, more critically, that his whole enterprise is a vacant gesture?

What is amazing is that Steichen was toying with such startling visual structures—curt nods, perhaps, toward the off-center domestic scenes of Bonnard—two years before he even went to France. From the start, what set him apart from his contemporaries was this instinctive audacity, an eagerness to intervene in the photographic process if it would help him to entrap the truth. "Whether this intervention consists merely of marking, shading and tinting in a direct print, or of stippling, painting and scratching on the negative, or of using glycerine, brush and mop on a print, faking has set in," he declared in 1903. "In fact, every photograph is a fake from start to finish."

You can now revisit the fruits of his falsity in "Camera Work: The Complete Illustrations 1903-1917" (Taschen; $29.99), an eight-hundred-page chunk of images and essays from the elegant quarterly that printed most of Steichen's masterpieces, culminating in the special Steichen issue of 1906. *Camera Work* was in essence the house journal of the Photo-Secession, a classy group of American photographers which was founded by Alfred Stieglitz in 1902 "to advance photography as applied to pictorial expression." It sounds kind of obvious, and in practice pictorial had a bad habit of drifting into pretty. Place Steichen's work next to that of other notables—friends of his like Clarence H. White and Gertrude Käsebier—and you realize that, for all the apparent closeness of tone, there is an unbridgeable chasm between Steichen's sturdy adventures in refinement and the bloodless pastoral of his fellow-Secessionists. Steichen suffered no trace of Pre-Raphaelite hangover. The man with the mop was ready for whatever modernism could throw at him.

THERE is nothing like a young artistic medium to stir up prophets and promoters, and for sheer hustle only Hollywood in its infancy can match the power play that went on between pioneer photographers. Much of Niven's book—rather too much—is taken up with the stolid discussions that weighed down photographic societies and journals at the turn of the century as mem-



"It's a game of power, speed, agility, and grace, but, most of all, Tom, it's a game of points."

• •

bers struggled to decide whether the use of a camera spelled art, craft, or business; the joke was, of course, that the briefest acquaintance with Edward Steichen demonstrated that it involved all three, and more. In 1917, for instance, he joined the Photographic Division of the Army Air Service; by the time of the Armistice, he was heading the entire outfit, and had become a vehement advocate of its strategic contribution. The young man who in quieter days had kicked his own tripod as he made an exposure, inducing a romantic shudder in the focus, was now obliged to reverse the process, and aim for "clear pictures from a vibrating, speeding airplane ten to twenty thousand feet in the air." Nothing, one might think, could be more rigorous, more immune to beauty, than an aerial photograph taken for military purposes; nevertheless, Lieutenant Colonel Steichen—as he was at the end of the war, and as he continued to list himself in the New York telephone directory—felt free to write about the "striking pictorial effects" of his wartime compositions, and to donate some of them to the Museum of Modern Art.

Still, there is no denying that the fog had lifted from Steichen's work, and that he was excited by the possibilities of the practical. Stieglitz's view was that his friend had betrayed the artistic scruples of the Secession. Another, more charitable view is that the scruples themselves rustled into a dead end, and that Steichen was merely keeping up with photography as it moved on. He described *Camera Work* in its later incarnation as being "about itself," whereas to his mind the world threw up plenty of stuff for photography to be about. It is possible, I think, to hold both views at once; no one could read Niven's book and not warm to the crammed curiosity of Steichen's life, but equally one has to admit that it was lived at a cost. In the twenties and thirties, he became one of the most famous and best-paid photographers in the world, and took portraits of those who were similarly blessed: our visions of Garbo, Paul Robeson, and the dapper, detramped Chaplin, to name but a few, are filtered directly through Steichen's eyes, and it is hard to cavil at the crisp textures and swift dramatic shorthand of his shoots for *Vanity Fair*. But Steichen was no longer breaking the mold; he was remaking it, and mending the cracks, and smoothing it with his skills.

A valiant effort to revalue that middle career is made by Patricia Johnston, in "Real Fantasies: Edward Steichen's Advertising Photography" (California; $55). Johnston is a less blurry writer than Penelope Niven, and a more reliable reader of a photograph, but, boy, does she have her work cut out. If you wanted the most flattering shots of Jergens hand lotion, Pond's cold cream, Pebeco toothpaste, and Scott toilet tissue ("Mother, why am I so sore and uncomfortable?"), then Steichen was your man. Johnston's insistence that he delved into the contradictions of consumerist society, however, is pitching a little strong. There was the occasional flash of the old courage, as when Steichen chose to promote Cannon towels with a succession of untowelled, shadowy bodies; but even that was no more than a tiptoe over the frontiers of taste, and, as one art director noted, in a brilliant summation of an entire movement in feminist aesthetics, "Women generally do not like photographs of nude women like men do, and women buy the towels."

Steichen still had a ruthless eye for line, and you can hardly blame him for following that line to where the money was; but for a truly bracing investigation of clarity, try flicking back to the end of the *Camera Work* anthology. As if to herald a new and uncluttered future, Stieglitz, in his two final editions, had reproduced the cityscapes and portraits of Paul Strand. If Steichen had used the camera as a painter would (once he even photographed himself with brush and palette), Strand treated it like a knife. Steichen, ever the fast learner, soon followed suit, but the younger generation of Strand and Edward Weston was pushing ahead, and there is no avoiding the uneasy sensation that, from the end of the First World War, Steichen had lost the plot.

PENELOPE NIVEN, on the other hand, is just getting going. She was formerly the biographer of Steichen's full-flowing brother-in-law, Carl Sandburg, and can't quite bring herself to turn off the tap. Steichen's difficult relations with his first wife, Clara, whom he married in 1903 and finally divorced, in a flurry of hand-to-hand recrimination, in 1922, inspire Niven to her most windswept prose: "He fascinated her with his powerful artistic energy and his early fame—not to mention his charismatic smile, his brooding intensity, his tall, lithe body, and the handsome face with the radiant gray-blue eyes. Was he better than she, or was she a cut above him?" She was madder than he, that's for sure. After reading a few hundred pages of this stuff, you learn to ride the gush, not least because Steichen's own temperament was streaked with romantic excess; in the double portrait that he took of himself and Clara on their honeymoon, he half smiles with secret pride, while she decorously pushes her white-clad bosom toward us, like the yearning heroine of Edvard Munch's "The Voice," painted ten years earlier. Yet Clara's expression is calm and dead. Did Steichen really mean to hint that happiness was over before it had even begun?

In Niven's hands, the arc of Steichen's endeavor curves without a break from the teen-ager with the bicycle, who offered "the first rubber-tire telegram-delivery service" in Milwaukee for fifteen dollars a month, to the portrait photographer who demanded (and got) an annual salary of thirty-five thousand dollars from Condé Nast in 1923, icing the cake with twenty thousand from J. Walter Thompson the following year. Indeed, such is the rolling mass of projects into which Steichen threw himself that he sometimes emerges from Niven's book as a born organizer and chronic inventor who just happened to devote his administrative talents to photography. Arriving at his studio, on East Sixty-third Street, for instance, Steichen would drive his car into the elevator and out into his office, on the third floor. ("Solves the parking problem," he explained to friends.) For the first half of his life, he considered himself as much a painter as a photographer, and when he finally gave it up, in 1923, there was a typical flamboyance in his renunciation, as he took his canvases into the garden and burned them. Gardens themselves were another site of triumph. Steichen didn't just grow flowers; he studied and crossbred them, first in France and then at his home in Umpawaug, Connecticut, producing delphiniums so grand that in 1936 he became the first—and, as far as one can gather, the only—gardener to have his flowers given their own show at the Museum of Modern Art.

When the Second World War came round, even Steichen thought he might miss out on the fun. "I wish I could get into this one, but I'm too old," he said miserably. Strings were pulled, however, and, at the age of sixty-two, he joined the United States Naval Reserves as a lieutenant commander. He saw action first in the Marshall Islands, on board the U.S.S. Lexington, where his neatest trick was to hang in the safety net at the edge of the deck and point his camera up at the Hellcats as they took off and landed over his head. Later, as chief of Navy combat photography, he went to Guam and Iwo Jima; when, in 1946, an official collection of wartime work by Steichen and others was published, it sold a million copies a month. According to one of his assistants, Wayne Miller, Steichen wanted to be "the Mathew Brady of World War II." War offered him the best and cruellest opportunity to live out the belief, expressed in his autobiography, that "usefulness has always been attractive in the art of photography." He had come a long way from the Flatiron Building, as exquisitely useless a photograph as it is possible to imagine: take it along as a practical guide to finding your way around Fifth Avenue and it would be only a matter of minutes before you fell down a manhole or banged your nose on a gas lamp.

Steichen's discovery of usefulness reached its peak in 1955, when he curated "The Family of Man," the exhibition that opened at the Museum of Modern Art and went on to tour the world. Eight years later, according to Niven, some nine million people in sixty-three countries had seen the show, and the accompanying book sold more than five million copies. The success of the project fortified Steichen's status as a household name, and most probably helped him earn the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963; yet, from this distance, "The Family of Man" feels more like an index to the ideals of its age than like the timeless statement of affirmation that Steichen intended. It contained the work of two hundred and seventy-three photographers, and there are dazzling individual contributions from people such as Brassaï, Eisenstaedt, and Dorothea Lange; but their images are somehow diluted, rather than concentrated, by the surrounding flood—a queasy foreshadowing of the visual torrent in which we now daily swim.

What is disconcerting is not the sight of journalism cranking itself up into art but the way in which the hapless viewers are obliged to offer that art the degree and measure of attention that they would normally give to journalism. As a result, the show's cascading humanism looks easy and low-cost; what was conceived as a kind of aesthetic response to the principles governing the United Nations now resembles a dry run for a Benetton commercial. Reviewing the original show, the *Times* announced that it "symbolizes the universality of human emotions." The only part of that phrase I can find no objection to is the word "of." The young Steichen who had dealt and fiddled with the particulars of a single scene or with the contours of one body had grown into the purveyor of all-purpose good will; morally, that is hard to fault, but we shouldn't kid ourselves that it comes with any guarantee of serious art.

Edward Steichen died in 1973; there is something awesome in the thought that one man could have learned his trade amid hand-tinted gum-bichromate prints and ended up in the age of the Nikon F and the motor drive. Whatever you think of photography, however you rate its powers and deplore the temptations that it seems so effortlessly to provide, Steichen is there at its core; his long career is a showcase for pretty well everything that you can dream of doing with one art. On his ninetieth birthday, in New York, he admitted, "When I first became interested in photography, I thought it was the whole cheese. My idea was to have it recognized as one of the fine arts. Today I don't give a hoot in hell about that." But some of Steichen's hoots were heavenly, and the echo went round the world. ♦

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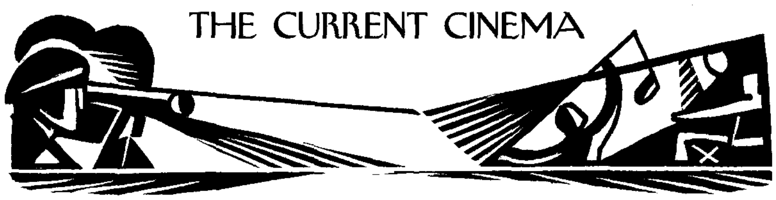

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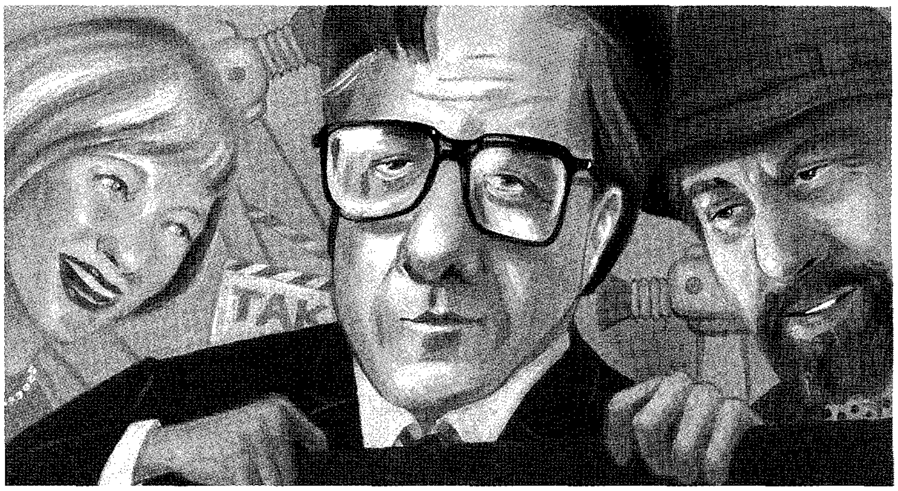
"Wag the Dog," "As Good as It Gets," and "The Winter Guest."

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

Barry Levinson's new film, "Wag the Dog," should come with a warning, like a pack of cigarettes: Exposure to this product may cause feelings of anxiety and irritation, especially if you don't find it as uproariously funny as the person sitting next to you does. "Wag the Dog," like Robert Altman's "The Player," skillfully exploits the peculiar contemporary wish to live in the toasty, media-wise epicenter, where everyone nods knowingly behind dark glasses and those who don't get it are left out in the cold. This movie is a very savvy comedy about a very "insider" subject—the politics of spin control—and it has been conceived with a shrewd awareness that there is no audience quite so lemminglike as one composed of urban sophisticates who pride themselves on their cynicism about the system. (If you have to ask which system, you're already off the bus.)



All the President's hustlers: Anne Heche, Dustin Hoffman, and Robert De Niro.

None of which is to say that "Wag the Dog" need hang its tail. As you'd expect from a screenplay by David Mamet (with Hilary Henkin as co-writer), the pace is rapid-fire, and the verbal innuendo fast and thick. Its premise is of the moment: What's the best way for a Presidential incumbent who's been caught in a sex scandal less than two weeks before Election Day to save his ass? Enter Conrad Brean, spinmeister extraordinaire (Robert De Niro). He devises the Machiavellian concept of a fake war—"the appearance of a war"—and then hires a Hollywood producer, Stanley Motss (Dustin Hoffman), to orchestrate it. Brean flies to Los Angeles with Winifred Ames, the President's squeaky-clean aide (Anne Heche), to coax the egotistical but cravenly insecure Motss into taking the job. On arriving at his mansion, they find him burnishing himself on an indoor tanning bed, and Brean explains the occasion for their visit to the entombed producer: "War is show business—that's why we're here."

Motss is an emotionally outsize creature who's given to invoking the many obstacles overcome in his movie-producing past. ("Did you ever shoot in Italy? Try three Italian starlets whacked out on Benzedrine and *grappa*.") With his tinted glasses and sprayed pitch-black helmet of a hair style, he looks as if he were permanently stuck in a Robert Evans fashion statement. Brean dangles the prospect of an Ambassador-

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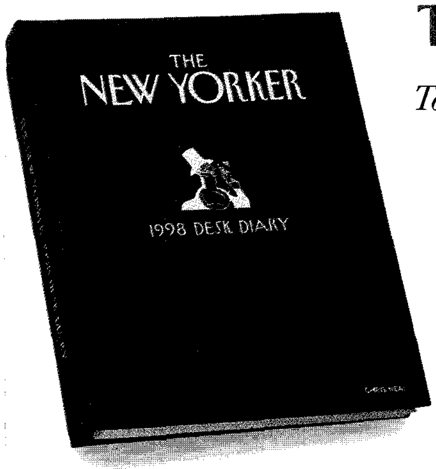

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ship while elaborating on the top-secret project: "We want you to produce a pageant, a theme, a song, the visuals." A script involving a suitcase bomb placed in Canada by Albanian terrorists is hastily improvised; Motss brings in his crew (including Willie Nelson, playing a clone of himself) to help with the creative imagery, as well as to keep an eye on the "back-end" profits from merchandising tie-ins. The movie goes on to skewer everything in its path, from a President who interrupts his mobilizing of the Sixth Fleet to kvetch about computerized war footage of a burning Albanian village, to war heroes with matey nicknames. (Woody Harrelson is Old Shoe, a manacled convict, who has raped a nun and is on antipsychotic medication.)

"Wag the Dog" is essentially one long joke about the American way of hype: it begins with the zero-sum point that politics is the highest manifestation of the universal theory of spin, and takes off maniacally from there. It's destined to be a critical and commercial hit, and if you're not completely charmed by it you may think there's something wrong with you rather than with the movie. It's not that I found the antic doings unfunny, exactly; it's that the humor remains at the same carefully calculated level of cleverness (until two-thirds of the way through, when the plot descends into sophomoric chaos). Levinson doesn't take you beyond what you already know; he never cuts loose in the way that Kubrick did in "Dr. Strangelove," which lifted you to metaphysical heights of lunacy. "Wag the Dog"'s tone of gleeful sendup takes the biases of its audience for granted, and this easy familiarity makes for a lack of tension; there's not the whiff of an alternative view to the prevailing one of dizzy sellout, except for a brief scene in which a C.I.A. agent (William H. Macy) tries to expose the hoax, only to be reassured by Brean's hokey patriotic rhetoric. Given the movie's cozy, video-ready cynicism, it comes as no surprise that none of the people in Motss's entourage have bothered to vote in years.

Levinson has directed with a tight hand—owing partly, no doubt, to the exigencies of an abbreviated shooting schedule. ("Wag the Dog" was shot in twenty-nine days, which is like a woman delivering a baby after two months of pregnancy.) De Niro comes up with one of his more easygoing performances, flashing that goofy but not really friendly smile from time to time but otherwise hanging back, seemingly content to let Hoffman steal the show. (It's become impossible to ascertain whether De Niro's non-desperado characters are emptied of all passion or whether the emptiness is merely an ironic pose. Has his intensity turned inward, or is he unable—or disinclined—to express emotions other than rage?) The role of Stanley Motss is the meatiest that Hoffman has had since "Tootsie," and the one that calls most fully upon the complexities of his half-shy, half-tyrannical personality. Hoffman's approach is almost architectonic; it's as though he'd been waiting for just such an opportunity to show us how a character is built up, layer by layer. His Hollywood producer is such a mixture of arrogance and neediness that he seems like a genotype for the profession. He reacts to all setbacks with his favorite expression—"This is nothing"—and yet beneath his bravado he is heartsick at the world's failure to appreciate him. Near the end, when Brean wearily begins to realize that the producer is a loose cannon, Motss vents his rage in a tirade that reveals how unwilling he is to bow out as an unsung impresario. "I did this for credit!" he yells. "I want the credit. . . . It's the best work I've ever done in my life." I was sad to see the last of him.

WHEREAS "Wag the Dog" doesn't ask us to believe a minute of it, "As Good as It Gets," the romantic comedy produced and directed by James Brooks, wants us to accept its sitcom rendering of life as bona-fide reality. Other viewers may cotton to the film as much as they did to "Terms of Endearment" and "Broadcast News," but Brooks's gleaming manipulativeness and trendy pieties made me grumpy. I kept expecting to hear a laugh track as an improbable trio of characters—quartet, if you count the dog—overcomes a heap of troubles and discovers collective happiness. The recipe goes something like this: Take one single mother who works as a waitress (Helen Hunt) and is burdened with a young son (Jesse James) who has a life-threatening disease; heat up with a romance novelist (Jack Nicholson), who has an obsessive-compulsive disorder and a seriously alienating manner; spice with a gay painter (Greg Kinnear), who has a sweet smile and no visible erotic attachments; sprinkle with generous amounts of misty-eyed moments provided by Verdell the dog, the painter's beloved Brussels griffon. Let the whole thing set against a New York City background, and presto!—you've created a demographically correct confection with the staying power of cotton candy.

“THE WINTER GUEST,” on the other hand, has the lingering radiance of art. In a small, frozen-over coastal town in Scotland, a mother and daughter (played by Emma Thompson and her real mother, Phyllida Law) spend a day together arguing and chatting, going from mutual exasperation to sudden bouts of fierce affection. The daughter, Frances, is grieving for her recently deceased husband; we first see her as she buries her face in the bed linens while her son, Alex (Gary Hollywood), solicitously bustles around her before setting off for school. The film is a character study, imbued with the tender realism of a William Trevor story. It has a slow, watchful quality, and everything seems worth paying attention to: the wonderful washed-out colors of the town, the mournful cawing of seagulls, the pair of elderly women in dignified black coats who follow funerals. There are two fourteen-year-old boys who play hooky and compare notes on the state of their genitals (one of them worries that he's doomed to be a “wanker”), and a strange, cheeky girl who leads Alex into sexual exploration. The dialogue is so exact that it's like a translucent skin through which we glimpse the shifting play of emotions. “The Winter Guest” has been directed with a great calmness of focus by the actor Alan Rickman, who wrote the script with Sharman Macdonald. Thompson, looking starkly beautiful (“Wear some earrings, for God's sake,” her mother, Elspeth, says when she sees her daughter's cropped hair. “Let folks know you're a woman”), restrains her tendency to oversell her characters. Her mother is blessed with good bones—“I'll make a beautiful skeleton,” she dryly notes—and a rare ability to tinge comical observation with wistfulness. I suppose one would call this a “small” film; if only “big” films were half so thrilling. ♦

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8	TE(L)ETH + ON
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11	MOOED (*mood* hom.)
13	MA(R)SH
18	B + RAT (rev.)
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20	INFER + NO
21	PEN + TAG + ON

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1	ANTHEM (anag.)
2	SHEAR (anag.)
3	TILLERS (anag.)
4	RATIO (anag.)
5	SHOVE (hidden)
6	KIN + D
10	SO(ARI)NG (*air* anag.)
12	DOT + E ON
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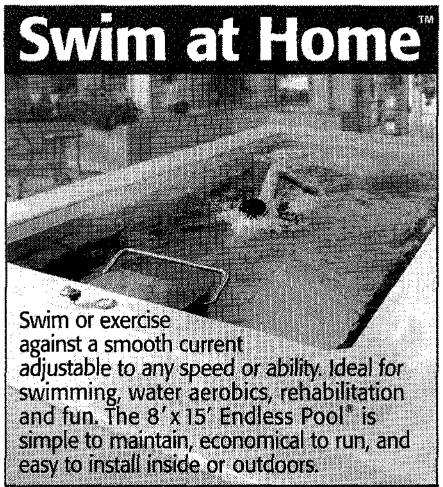

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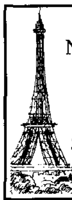

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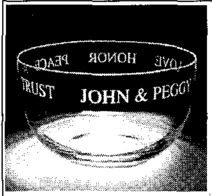

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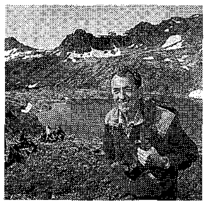

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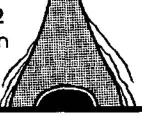

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TREACHERY GROWS IN BROOKLYN

A family tragedy echoes the betrayals of McCarthyism.

BY JOHN LAHR

JUST as kittens pounce on leaves to practice mousing, we go to plays to practice thinking; the more subtle the story, the more rigorously our analytic skills are tested and the deeper is our exhilaration. This is why we return to plays like Arthur Miller's "A View from the Bridge" (at the Roundabout), which, despite its cool Broadway reception in 1955, has proved to be a potent and durable American fable.

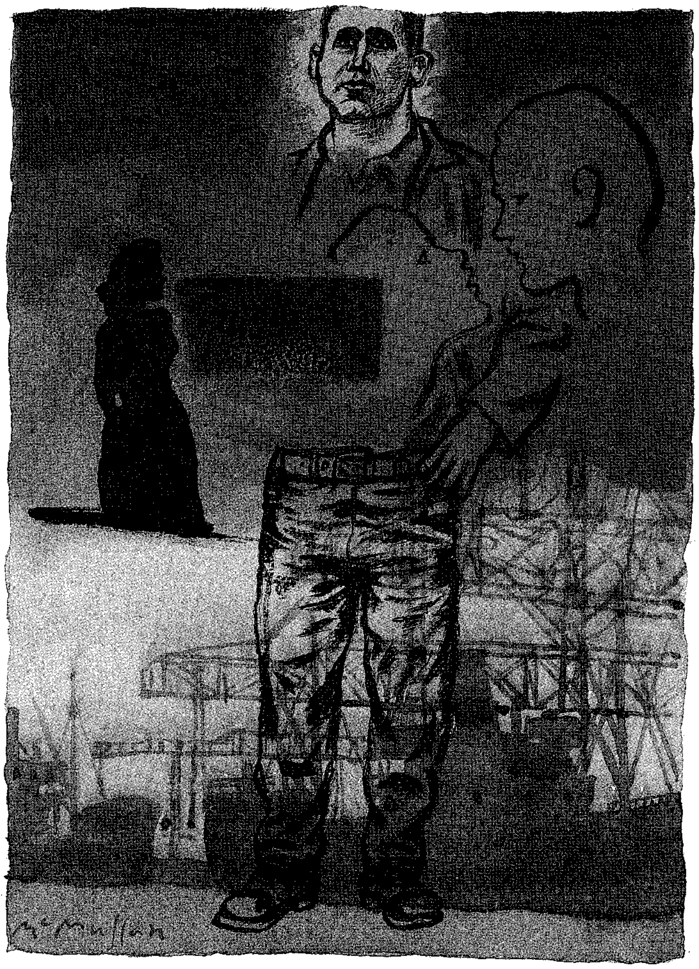
Miller's story of the longshoreman Eddie Carbone and his incestuous obsession with an orphaned niece began as an anecdote told to the playwright by a friend. Miller, who wrote it quickly as a one-act, was filled with a sense of wonder at the primal passion of the conflict and the tragic inevitability of his hero's fate—the "clear, clean line of his catastrophe." Conceived at the height of the McCarthy maelstrom, Miller's tale of betrayal speaks cunningly to the blinkered compulsions of the era, but the play's enduring appeal lies in the unadorned thrust of its narrative. In this cracking story, the wounds of the Carbone family are laid out as matter-of-factly as a body in an operating theatre—in order to engage, as Miller writes, "faculties of knowing as well as feeling." Miller was in rebellion against the psychological special pleading of fifties drama. "The tender emotions, I felt, were being overworked," he explains in the play's introduction. He goes on, "To bathe the audience in tears, to grip people by the age-old methods of suspense, to theatricalize life, in a word, seemed faintly absurd to me if not disgusting."

"A View from the Bridge" takes place in Red Hook, which the play calls "the gullet of New York swallowing the tonnage of the world." In the Roundabout's revival of the longer version, the set designer, David Gallo, elegantly conjures this tough corner of the universe, with a floor of black brick, a scrim on which bold, painterly strokes pick out the shapes of cranes and the hulls of ships, and a small circular platform center stage, behind which are a few rows of raised steps to suggest an amphitheatre. Within this spare but suggestive space, the director, Michael Mayer, skillfully creates the hubbub of the community—a sort of Greek chorus—out of which Eddie Carbone emerges.

Anthony LaPaglia, who has a thick body and a rough voice, gives the character of Eddie a brooding, physical, exciting presence. He makes him seem a stolid but standup working guy. *Carbone* means "coal" in Italian, and Eddie, like his name, is hard, and dark, and gives off a slow heat. According to the play's narrator, a local lawyer named Alfieri (Stephen Spinella, who is appealing but hasn't the girth or the gravitas that the role demands), Eddie is "as good a man as he had to be in a life that was hard and even." He works, raises his niece, goes bowling, eats, sleeps. As Alfieri tells us, Eddie "never expected to have a destiny."

The audience meets Eddie at the moment his life is about to change: two "submarines"—illegal Italian immigrants smuggled off a freighter—arrive at his apartment to hole up for a few months, just when his niece, who is seventeen, announces that she's quitting school, against her uncle's wishes, to take a job with local plumbers. Initially, Eddie is a gruff but gentle patriarch, cautioning Beatrice, his frazzled wife (the expert Allison Janney), about her big heart, and worrying like a proud guardian about the career choice of the coltish Catherine (Brittany Murphy). "Please, do me a favor, will ya? I want you to be with different kind of people. I want you to be in a nice office," he tells her. "Maybe a lawyer's office someplace in New York in one of them nice buildings."

Mayer does a superb job of focussing the tension among the well-cast actors who make up the Carbone household. From the outset, the chemistry between La Paglia and Murphy is terrific. Whether Catherine is setting the table or affectionately wrapping herself around her uncle to coax him into a good mood, Murphy's precocious performance captures every nuance of the character's child-woman appeal, from her dutiful sweetness to her unknowing sexuality. At one point, Eddie tries to warn Catherine of her seductiveness: "Listen, you been givin' me the willies the way you walk down the street, I mean it." He goes on, "I'm tellin' you you're walkin' wavy." At first, even to the audience this seems like avuncular advice. But, once the submarines—Marco (the excellent Adam Trese) and Rodolpho (the charming Gabriel Olds)—move in, Eddie's paranoia and vindictiveness begin to show themselves. "What's the high heels for, Garbo?" he says to his niece, embarrassing her in front of the company. It's not just strangers who have taken up residence in Carbone's home but envy.



In a revival of "A View from the Bridge," Anthony LaPaglia gives the character of Eddie Carbone a brooding physical presence.

What's fascinating here is Miller's subtle depiction of envy's corrosive power. Catherine falls in love with the unmarried Rodolpho—a blond, happy-go-lucky, versatile guy, who likes to sing in his high tenor voice, who cooks, and who even makes Catherine a dress. At the start, Eddie merely puts down Rodolpho as "a weird" and "a hit-and-run guy," who is after her for citizenship. He sees no connection between his invective, his sexual indifference to Beatrice ("When am I gonna be a wife again?" she asks him), and his unconscious wishes. Instead, he projects these perverse feelings onto Rodolpho, whom he suspects of being gay. "I can't cook, I can't sing, I can't make dresses, so I'm on the waterfront," Eddie says. "But if I could cook, if I could sing, if I could make dresses, I wouldn't be on the waterfront. I would be someplace else. I would be like in a dress store." In one stunning, spoiling moment, he plants a lingering kiss on Rodolpho's mouth as Catherine tries to tear him away. ("What you done in front of her," Beatrice says later. "She goes around shakin' all the time, she can't go to sleep!") In Eddie's eyes, Rodolpho is a thief: "I take the blankets off my bed for him and he takes and puts his dirty filthy hands on her like a goddam thief!" But it is Eddie who wants to rob Catherine of both her innocence and her love.

When Eddie can't humiliate Rodolpho, he tips off the immigration authorities—an act of betrayal that brings about the destruction of his household. As the two immigrants are led away for deportation, Marco points a finger at Eddie, and says, "That one! He killed my children. That one stole the food from my children!" At this moment, Miller's storytelling takes a resonant, brilliant turn: Eddie is ready to die to preserve the fantasy of his moral purity and says, "He's gonna take that back. He's gonna take that back or I'll kill him!"

As a metaphor of the festering paranoia of McCarthyism, the play seems daring and subtle. What Eddie hates about Rodolpho, besides his freedom to court Catherine, is his artistic temperament—the light, humorous, dreamy part of him, which claims her imagination, and which Eddie doesn't possess. Rodolpho's appeal to the community, if not to the troubled Eddie, is delightfully clinched by the infectious giggling of Daniel Serafini-Sauli (who makes his Broadway début as Eddie's sidekick) every time Rodolpho's name is mentioned. Behind this powerful unfolding of a personal tragedy, Miller seems to be suggesting something larger as well: that the betrayals of the House Un-American Activities Committee were manifestations not just of a fear of Communism but of an envy provoked by creativity and freedom—an envy that makes enemies of outsiders. It says a lot for the power of Miller's play and for the impact of Mayer's production that the sense of awe and terror echoes down the decades.

BY contrast to the thrilling straight line of Miller's story, Tina Howe's "Pride's Crossing" (at the Mitzi Newhouse) is a tedious switchback ride up a mountain of family memories. The author crosscuts between the old age of Mabel Tidings Bigelow, who is ninety and once swam the English Channel, and the upper-middle-class family that she tried, but finally failed, to break free of. Howe makes the fatal mistake of confusing illustrative incident with dramatic action. Cherry Jones, who could charm the spots off a Dalmatian, gives a vivid impersonation of idealized old age, with all the tics, fumbles, and feisty outbursts of a nonagenarian polished to a high shine. But what Howe can't provide is a plot, or any three-dimensional subsidiary characters to inhabit it. The play, directed by Jack O'Brien, isn't so much about swimming as about treading water. ♦

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STOCK MARKET PLUNGES 800 POINTS

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DOW REBOUNDS AFTER SELL-OFF PANIC TRACED TO REMARK IN RESTAURANT BY FED CHAIRMAN ALAN GREENSPAN

Was Asking Waiter for Salt in French

*

CAMERAS SHOW CLINTON ACCEPTING CHECKS FROM ASIAN CONTRIBUTORS DURING STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH

*

HOUSE PASSES CAMPAIGN-FINANCE BILL LIMITING DONATIONS FROM CORPORATIONS, FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS, BILLIONAIRES TO $100 MILLION PER CANDIDATE

Trent Lott Decries 'Chilling Effect' on Freedom of Expression, Vows 'Vigorous' Fight

*

EXHAUSTED SEPTUPLET DAD SAYS SEVEN BABIES ARE 'WAY TOO MANY'

*

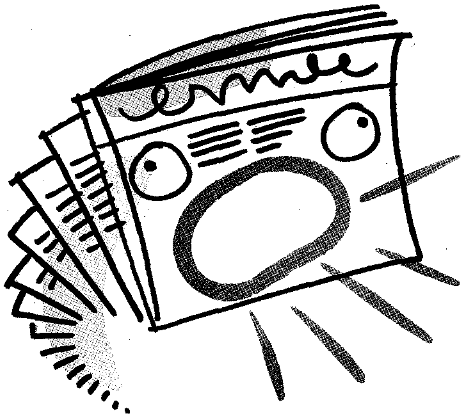
UNABOMBER TRIAL JUDGE ORDERS MISTRIAL AFTER FBI TRANSPORTS WRONG SHACK FROM MONTANA TO CALIFORNIA COURTROOM

SEPTUPLET DAD HIRES LOUISE WOODWARD AS NANNY

*

GORE DENIES FUND-RAISING AT CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

'Ignorance Is Bris,' Says V.P.



REAGAN BIO SAYS WHITE HOUSE AIDE PUT DEAD FROGS IN GORBACHEV'S BED AT '87 REYKJAVIK SUMMIT

Aim Was to 'Mess with His Head' During Arms Talks

*

BRITISH RALLY DEFENDS WOODWARD

Remaining Triplets in Guarded Condition

*

MIR HEADED FOR RE-ENTRY

Attempt to Convert Onboard Reactor Into Liquor Distillery Accidentally Triggers Space Station's Descent

*

JUDGE FINES WOODWARD TEN DOLLARS

British Public Expresses Outrage Over 'Inhuman' Punishment; Asks: 'Hasn't She Suffered Enough?'

FISTFIGHT BREAKS OUT ABOARD MIR AS COSMONAUTS DISPUTE RE-ENTRY BLAME

*

GIULIANI SAYS HE WILL ENTER PRESIDENTIAL RACE IF WIFE STOPS DUMPING ON HIM

*

DONNA HANOVER CALLS HUSBAND 'WORST HUMAN BEING ON PLANET' BUT WILL CAMPAIGN WITH HIM FOR PRESIDENT

*

YELTSIN URGES WORRIED WORLD TO 'STAY INDOORS' AS MIR NEARS

*

CANADA RENAMED NANOOTKASQUIT IN EFFORT TO APPEASE NATIVE MINORITIES

Inuit Word Means 'Cold, Boring Place North of Warmer, Mighty Superpower'

*

IN APPARENT BOTCHED OPERATION, ISRAELI SPY AGENCY, MOSSAD, BLOWS UP OWN HEADQUARTERS

*

IN MOVE TO MAKE TOURISM SAFER, EGYPT WILL RELOCATE PYRAMIDS, VALLEY OF THE KINGS, TO ARIZONA

*

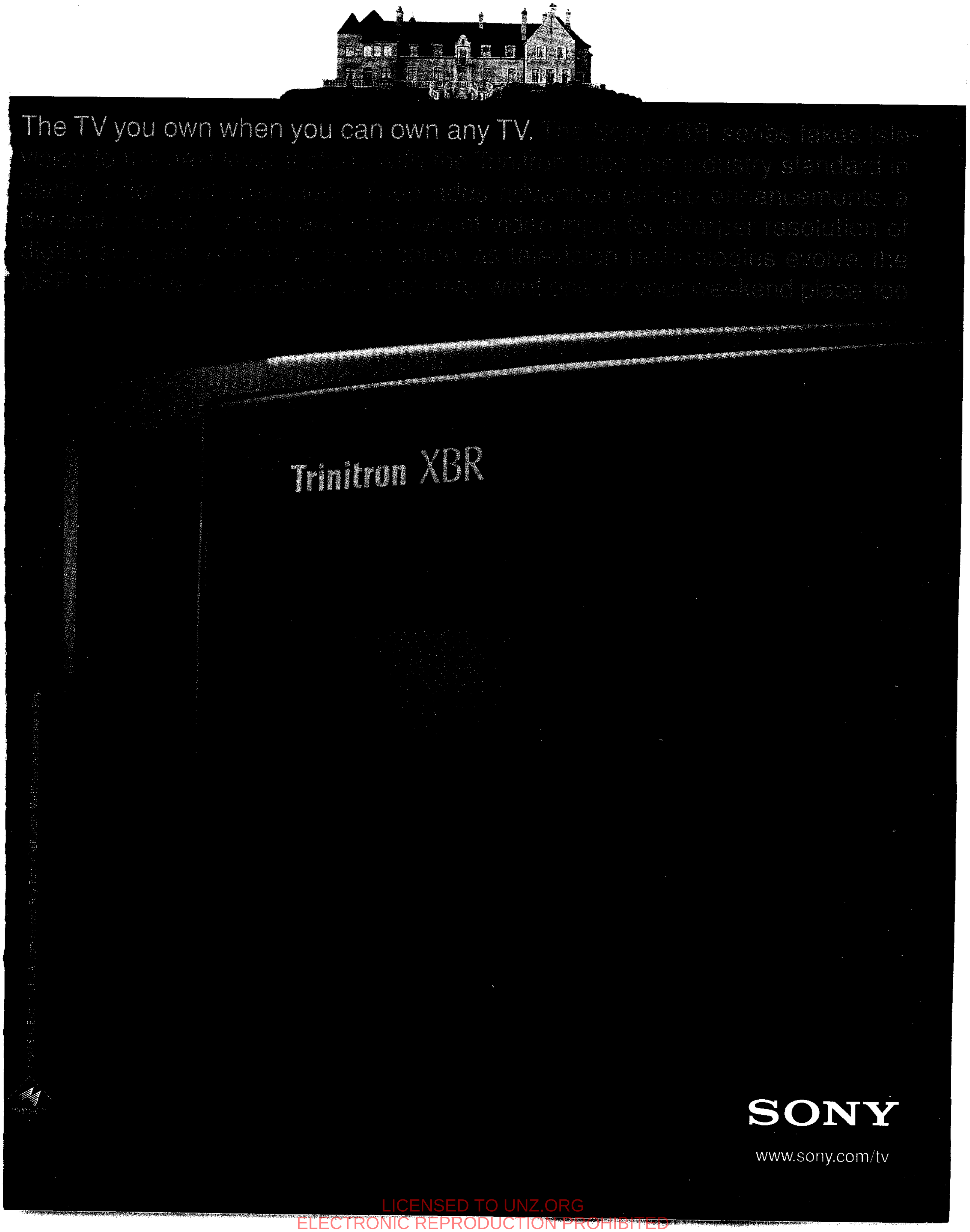
JURASSIC CENTRAL PARK WEST

Macy's Parade Takes Grim Turn as Winds Cause Barney Balloon to Stomp Japanese Tourists

*

NANOOTKASQUITIANS CHEER AS MIR CRASHES WITHIN NATION'S BORDERS

'Something Interesting Has Finally Happened Here!' Crowds Exult; May Change Name Back to Canada ♦



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